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# 2020 *Vision for Montana State Parks*



APRIL 1998

## MONTANA STATE PARK SYSTEM PLAN:

## PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

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## **PREFACE:**

### **2020 VISION FOR MONTANA STATE PARKS**

This long-range plan for the Montana State Park System is a work in progress; comments and suggestions are encouraged. The Plan has already benefited significantly from the time people took to attend public workshops early in the process, complete survey forms, and participate in a focus group session.

In addition to public involvement, many State Park staff members from throughout the state helped with the Plan in various ways. The Helena Office Parks staff, in particular, committed a significant amount of time to discussing issues and goals, writing sections of the Plan, and reviewing early drafts. A number of Fish, Wildlife & Parks staff members outside the Parks Division also made important contributions to improving this document.

If you would like to comment on the Plan, or have questions, contact Jeff Erickson at the addresses below. Please return any comments by June 30, 1998.

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If you have general questions about Montana State Parks, please call 444-3750 or visit the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Internet page at <http://fwp.mt.gov>. Thank you for your interest.







# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

## MONTANA STATE PARKS SYSTEM PLAN

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.	THE PLANNING PROCESS.....	5
	Public Involvement.....	5
	Public Scoping Workshops and Comment Period	
	State Park Attitude Surveys	
	Focus Groups	
	Public Review of Draft Plan	
	Agency Involvement.....	8
	Parks Division Meeting Workshops	
	Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) Commission	
	FWP Staff	
	A Programmatic Approach: FWP Reorganization Initiative.....	10
	Plan Implementation and Monitoring: Outcomes and Six Year Plans.....	10
	Outcomes and Performance-Based Budgeting	
	Six-Year Plans	
III.	MISSION AND HISTORY OF THE PARK SYSTEM.....	13
	Mission and Legislative Authority.....	13
	History of the Park System and Key Legislation.....	15
	Overview	
	Chronology	
	Review of Earlier Planning Efforts.....	28
	Montana State Parks System Plan (1989)	
	Montana State Park System: A Financial Review (1989)	
	State Parks Future Committee Report (1990)	
	Status Report to the State Park Futures Committee (1992)	
	Montana's Parks: Present and Future (1997)	
	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Vision Statement (Draft--1998)	

*Table of Contents*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

<b>IV. THE PARKS DIVISION:</b>	
<b>ORGANIZATION, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>51</b>
Parks Division Organization.....	52
Employees and Organizational Structure of the Parks Division	
Parks Division Budget, Funding Sources, and Fees	
Parks Division Programs and Activities.....	58
Park Operations and Maintenance	
Parks Capital Program	
Parks Division Planning	
State Trails Program	
Watchable Wildlife Program	
Fishing Access Site Program	
Interpretation/Education	
Special Events and Services	
Boating Program	
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program	
Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program (Wallop-Breaux Act)	
Historic/Cultural Program	
Internship Program	
Volunteers	
Accessibility: Crossing the Barriers Program	
Parks Safety Program	
Law Enforcement	
Concessions and Commercial Use of Parks	
Information and Promotion	
Relationship to Other Agencies, Programs, Plans, and Initiatives.....	92
Partnerships	
Parks Friends and Support Groups	
Montana Conservation Corps	
Montana State Parks and Wildlife Interpretive Association	
Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI)	
Montana's 1998-2002 Strategic Plan for Travel and Tourism	
Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan	
<b>V. THE STATE PARK SYSTEM:</b>	
<b>CLASSIFICATIONS, INVENTORIES, OPPORTUNITIES.....</b>	<b>101</b>
Classification of Parks Division Lands.....	101
State Parks	
Affiliated Lands	
Fishing Access Sites	

*Table of Contents*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

Park Resource Inventory.....	108
Park System Land Base	
Natural Resources	
Cultural Resources	
Recreation Resources	
Facilities and Infrastructure	
Threats to Existing State Parks.....	126
Region 1	
Region 2	
Region 3	
Region 4	
Region 5	
Region 7	
Potential System Gaps, Acquisition Priorities, and Management Changes.....	141
Region 1	
Region 2	
Region 3	
Region 4	
Region 5	
Region 6 and 7	
 <b>VI. NATIONAL AND STATE-WIDE TRENDS</b>	
<b>AFFECTING MONTANA STATE PARKS.....</b>	<b>153</b>
National Trends.....	153
State-wide Trends.....	169
Demographics	
Economy	
Selected Recreation Trends	
Non-Resident Visitation	
Visitation at Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks	
 <b>VII. MONTANA STATE PARK VISITATION TRENDS</b>	
<b>AND SATISFACTION MEASURES.....</b>	<b>187</b>
Introduction and Summary.....	187
Park Visitation by Region.....	189
State-wide Park Visitation.....	201
State Park Visitation Trends: 1980-1995.....	203
Resident/Non-Resident Visitation Trends: 1985-1995.....	204
Selected State Park Satisfaction Measures.....	205

*Table of Contents*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

<b>VIII. ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR MONTANA'S STATE PARK SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>209</b>
External Forces with Potential to Affect Montana State Parks.....	209
Strategic Alternatives for Montana State Parks.....	211
 <b>IX. LOOKING TOWARD 2020: OUTCOMES, ISSUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES FOR MONTANA STATE PARKS.....</b>	 <b>219</b>
Overview of Issues and Outcomes.....	219
Planning and Design.....	223
Configuration and Coverage of the State Park System	
Conservation of Park Resources	
State Park Management Plans	
Park Design and Development	
Policy.....	233
Commercial Use of Park Sites	
Role of Private Sector	
Water-based Recreation Management	
Operations, Management, and Maintenance.....	239
Crime, Vandalism, and Enforcement	
Standards: Design, Operations, Maintenance, and Safety	
Education, Interpretation, and Special Events	
Volunteers and Interns	
Communication and Coordination.....	248
Civic Organizations, Support Groups, Tourism Associations, and Other Partners	
Communication Within and Between Agencies	
Visitor Information	
Funding and Fees.....	253
Parks Program Funding Sources	
Parks Program Fees	
Administrative.....	261
Parks Program Staffing	
Monitoring Visitation and Visitor Experience	
Programmatic Outcomes, Performance-based Budgeting, and Six-Year Plans	
Parks Program/FWP Decision-Making Hierarchy	

*Table of Contents*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

<b>X. STATE PARK POLICY STATEMENTS.....</b>	<b>269</b>
Recreation.....	269
Hunting	
Playground Equipment and Family Activities	
Recreational Conflicts	
Trails and Off-Road Recreation	
Resource Protection.....	272
Maintaining Historic Character	
Stabilization and Repair of Historic Structures	
Resource Protection Versus Recreation Development	
Staff and Administrative Issues.....	273
Lodging of Employees	
Interns	
Volunteers	
Law Enforcement Approach	
Safety of Parks Program Employees in Threatening Situations	
Parks Employees Serving as Organization Officers	
Staffing	
Partnerships	
Naming Sites or Components of Sites	
Park Operations and Management.....	276
Long-Term Fee Policies	
Commercial Use of Parks	
Refunds/Compensation for Bad Experiences	
Advertisements in Parks/Signing	
Dogs and Other Pets	
Relationship Between User Fees Collected and Budgets	
Weed Management	
Mosquito Spraying	
Maintenance Standards	
Safety	
Burial or Spreading of Cremated Remains	
Privatization	
Maximum Versus Optimum Use	
Film Making/Commercials	
Recycling	
Planning and Design.....	280
Buffer Zones/Acquisition/Park Protection	
Breadth and Viability of the State Park System	
Management Plans	



*Table of Contents*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

Utilizing Design Tools for Resource Protection	
Public Involvement	
Visitor Services.....	282
Education and Interpretation	
Special Events	
Swim Areas/Life Guards	
Group Use	
Customer Service	
Restroom Use for Non-Paying Guests	
Appropriate Improvements and Visitor Centers	
Competition with the Private Sector	
<b>XI. REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>XII. APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>293</b>
A) List and Description of State Parks	
B) Public and Agency Scoping Period Results	
C) State Parks Attitude Survey Results (those not included elsewhere in Plan)	
D) Planning Term Definitions	
E) Description of Funding Sources	
F) 1998-99 State Park Fee Rule	
G) Generalized List of Special Events	
H) List of Accessible Sites	
I) List of State Park Friends Groups	
J) Excerpt from Five Year Montana Strategic Plan for Travel and Tourism	
K) Plant and Animal Species with Special Status in Montana State Parks	
L) Draft Outcomes and Performance Measures for Trails and Watchable Wildlife Programs	
M) FWP Helena Administrators Team Decision-making Model	
N) Miscellaneous Parks Program Policy Statements	



*Table of Contents*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
Figure 1	Montana State Parks Map.....	Executive Summary
Figure IV-1	Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Budget (FY 98).....	51
Figure IV-2	Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Organization Chart.....	53
Figure IV-3	Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Regions.....	54
Figure IV-4	Parks Division Regional Organization.....	56
Figure IV-5	Montana State Parks: Helena Office Organizational Chart (1998).....	57
Figure IV-6	Parks Division Operations Budget, By Program (FY 97).....	59
Figure IV-7	Parks Program Operations, By Funding Source (FY 97).....	59
Figure IV-8	Parks Division Interns.....	84
Figure IV-9	Parks Division Volunteer Use.....	85
Figure V-1	Montana State Park Distribution.....	109
Figure V-2	Montana Land Ownership Patterns.....	110
Figure V-3	Desired Level Of Facilities.....	119
Figure V-4	Type of Overnight Stay.....	119
Figure V-5	Attitudes on Adding New Parks.....	143
Figure V-6	Attitudes on Acquiring Inholdings Within State Parks.....	144
Figure V-7	Attitudes on Increasing Buffer Areas Around Parks.....	144
Figure VI-1	Outdoor Recreation Participation Rates for Adult Americans, 1996.....	156
Figure VI-2	Projected Growth in Participation for Selected Outdoor Recreation Activities, 2000-2040 (U.S.).....	157
Figure VI-3	Aging of America: 1996-2020.....	161
Figure VI-4	Projected Increases in Participation, 1990-2025 (U.S.).....	164
Figure VI-5	Participation in Outdoor Recreation by Income Level (U.S.).....	165
Figure VI-6	Place of Residence.....	172
Figure VI-7	Non-farm Labor Income, 1986-1996.....	174
Figure VI-8	Vacationers Reasons for Visiting Montana.....	177
Figure VI-9	Montana Resident and Nonresident Participation in Selected Activities, 1996.....	178
Figure VI-10	Expenditures By Montana Residents.....	179
Figure VI-11	Nonresident Visitation to Montana.....	182
Figure VI-12	Yearly Change in Visitation to Montana.....	182
Figure VI-13	Montana Lodging Tax Collection.....	182
Figure VI-14	National Park Visits.....	184

*Table of Contents*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

Figure VII-1	State Park Visitor Satisfaction.....	206
Figure VII-2	Satisfaction With Types of State Park Facilities.....	206
Figure VII-3	Satisfaction With Maintenance of State Parks.....	206
Figure VII-4	Protecting and Enhancing Cultural, Historical, and Natural Resources in State Parks.....	207
Figure VII-5	Satisfaction With Level of Staff Professionalism.....	207
Figure VII-6	Satisfaction With Education/Interpretation.....	207
Figure VII-7	Satisfaction With Enforcement of Rules/Regulations.....	208
Figure VII-8	Value of Facility Fees Paid.....	208
Figure IX-1	Outcomes-Based Planning Process.....	220

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
Table IV-1	Parks Division: FY 97 FTE Totals.....	55
Table V-1	State Park Facilities Matrix.....	121
Table V-2	Attitudes About The Size of The Montana State Park System.....	142
Table VI-1	Montana and United States, 1990-2010: Population By Age-Actual and Projected.....	170
Table VI-2	Rapidly Growing Montana Counties, 1990-1996.....	172
Table VI-3	Estimated Number of Adults Participating, 1985-2000.....	181
Table VII-1	Region 1 Park Visitation, 1995.....	190
Table VII-2	1980-1995 Visitation Trends, Region 1.....	191
Table VII-3	Region 2 Park Visitation, 1995.....	193
Table VII-4	1980-1995 visitation Trends, Region 2.....	194
Table VII-5	Region 3 Park Visitation, 1995.....	195
Table VII-6	1980-1995 Visitation Trends, Region 3.....	196
Table VII-7	Region 4 Park Visitation, 1995.....	197
Table VII-8	1980-1995 Visitation Trends, Region 4.....	198
Table VII-9	Region 5 Park Visitation, 1995.....	199
Table VII-10	1980-1995 Visitation Trends, Region 5.....	199
Table VII-11	Region 7 Park Visitation Trends, 1995.....	200
Table VII-12	1980-1995 Visitation Trends, Region 7.....	201
Table VII-13	State-wide Visitation Totals From 28 Montana State Park Units In 1995.....	201
Table VII-14	State Park Visitation Trends: A Comparison of Indicator Sites For 1980-94 and 1985-95.....	203
Table VII-15	Trends in Resident/Non-resident Visitation: Montana State Parks, 1985- 1995.....	205

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

### **2020 VISION FOR MONTANA STATE PARKS**

In the depths of the Great Depression, an important chapter in our history was started when Lewis and Clark Caverns became Montana's first State Park in 1936. Three years later, a commission was formed and given the authority to establish a state park system in Montana. Arising from these humble beginnings, there are now 41 parks in the Montana State Park system, with the mission of conserving a representative diversity of the state's natural, cultural, and recreational amenities, providing resource education and interpretation, and helping facilitate sustainable economic development through tourism (see figure 1).

Montana's State Parks fulfill a particular and often misunderstood purpose in a state with millions of acres in federal public ownership. Montana State Parks are not, by in large, multiple use areas intended to generate revenue from commodities, such as State School Trust lands. Nor are they in public ownership solely for boating, hiking, fishing, and other forms of active recreation, although these are extremely important activities. Rather, parks are charged to conserve particular kinds of natural, cultural, and recreational resources, in order to provide learning and recreational opportunities that showcase a variety of Montana's most exceptional resource values.

2020 Vision provides broad, long-range direction on where the Montana State Park system should be headed through the first two decades of the twenty-first century. The Plan lays the groundwork for the future from several different perspectives, including an inventory of resources, threats, and opportunities; an examination of trends and attitudes affecting the system; an evaluation of alternative futures for Montana State Parks; a set of outcomes, or intended end results; a list of major issues affecting the system and the goals developed to address them; and finally, a comprehensive set of policy statements developed to guide the system into the twenty-first century. The focus in 2020 Vision is on the 41 state parks; the document is not a strategic plan for all the programs the Parks Division is involved with (e.g., Trails Program, Fishing Access Site Program, etc.), although they are described in the Plan.

The state park system today is in relatively solid shape, after enduring significant budget cuts and size reductions during the 1980s. Maintenance has improved and progress has been made on key capital improvements. A recent Montana survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the system: 94 percent of the respondents who had visited a Montana State Park in the last two years indicated they were satisfied with the experience (FWP 1998). However, the system's size, scope, budget, and staffing are all relatively static. At the same time, visitation is growing, resources are under increasing pressure, demands on staff are rising, and there is currently little funding or political support to undertake new initiatives.

There is much more that Montana State Parks could do to improve the quality of life for both Montana residents and visitors, if provided with sufficient public and political support, along



*Executive Summary*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

with the resources to do so. Public involvement during the development of this plan suggests that Montana residents and visitors alike support a larger role for the Montana State Park Program; as detailed in the Plan, there is no shortage of worthy opportunities, many of which will eventually be lost unless action is taken.

New opportunities notwithstanding, however, the primary focus of Montana State Parks staff will continue to be on selectively improving visitor services and maintenance, and ensuring that key park resources are protected and enhanced. Ultimately, Parks Program staff want to manage the system in such a way that visitor expectations are consistently exceeded when they visit a Montana State Park.

Summarized below are some of the main themes of 2020 Vision.

## **Alternative Futures for Montana's State Park System**

### **External Forces with Potential to Affect Montana State Parks**

The pace of change in the United States and in Montana is increasing relentlessly, with important implications for all aspects of life, as well as Montana State Parks. There are a number of key factors with the potential to have important long-term impacts on Montana's State Parks, as listed and discussed below:

**\* POPULATION GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:** Montana's population is forecast to continue growing during the next twenty years, although not as rapidly as during the first half of the 1990s. This increasing population will put more pressure on the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

**\* CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE AND LOCATION OF THE POPULATION:** The population in both the United States as a whole and Montana in particular is becoming older, increasingly urban, and more culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse.

**\* TOURISM:** Montana is currently hosting approximately 8 million out-of-state visitors per year, a dramatic increase from 10 years ago; non-resident visits are expected to continue increasing, albeit more slowly than in recent years. The natural, cultural, and recreational resources encompassed by state parks are a key reason people visit Montana, and are an essential part of the state economy; tourism is now the second largest industry in the state.



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STATE PARKS AND MONUMENTS

WILDLIFE REFUGES

INDIAN RESERVATIONS

INTERSTATE HIGHWAY

COUNTY HIGHWAY

RAILROAD

Map produced by:  
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Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks



FIGURE 1  
MONTANA STATE PARKS

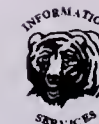


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|--|--------------------------------|
| ◆ STATE PARKS  | ■ NATIONAL PARKS AND MONUMENTS |
| ■ BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT                                    | ■ NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES    |
| ■ INDIAN LANDS OR RESERVATIONS                                 | ■ STATE LANDS                  |
| ■ MILITARY RESERVES AND WITHDRAWALS<br>ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS | — INTERSTATE HIGHWAY           |
| ■ NATIONAL FOREST  | — STATE OR COUNTY HIGHWAY      |
| ■ NATIONAL FOREST WILDERNESS                                   | — U.S. HIGHWAY                 |

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2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

\* **POLITICS, GOVERNMENT BUDGETS, AND AGENCY STAFFING LEVELS:** The current political mood at both the federal and state level makes it difficult to secure funding and staffing. During each legislative session, there are attempts to divert or eliminate state park funding sources. Several implications include an increasing need to rely on volunteers, a search for new funding sources, and a reluctance to aggressively take on new opportunities without adequate resources.

\* **CHANGES IN OUTDOOR RECREATION TECHNOLOGY AND USE PATTERNS:** The rate of technological change and innovation in outdoor recreation is increasing. Park managers must react with increasing speed to monitor new trends, evaluate their impacts, and adapt management accordingly.

\* **SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES:** Changes in values, culture, and society have an impact on the recreational preferences of Americans and--ultimately--park managing agencies. Technological and socio-cultural changes can occur quickly, and interact together in ways that are difficult to predict.

\* **ECONOMIC CHANGES:** Major Montana and U.S. economic changes will affect outdoor recreation in general and state park use in particular, in addition to impacting agency budgets.

### **Strategic Alternatives for Montana State Parks**

Listed below are some of the major strategic choices facing the state park system. Each set of alternatives is framed as a kind of continuum; collectively, they suggest some of the trade-offs which might present themselves under the variety of changing conditions which will unfold during the next 20-25 years.

The preferred alternatives are identified in bold italics; if the larger forces discussed above shift, another option may emerge as being more desirable or realistic. These alternatives are intended to sketch out a general, long-term direction for the park system. In most instances, the paths outlined here do not represent major departures from what is presently in place.

\* **DEVELOPMENT:**

- + Significant Amounts of New Development Throughout the System
- + ***Maintain Current System of Facilities, with Carefully Selected New Development***
- + Maintain Current System, with Little or No New Development
- + Temporarily or Permanently Close Selected Facilities



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Beyond what is currently planned, a substantial amount of major new development in the park system is not anticipated during the next twenty years. There is currently neither widespread public support nor funding for the kind of highly developed state park systems found in a number of other states around the country. There is a strong tradition of primitive recreation in Montana. In some cases, simply providing access and open space may be all that is required. On the other hand, Montanans and out-of-state visitors desire a balanced state park system, which retains a rustic character in some units, while offering a broader array of facilities in others. A rapidly growing elderly population will increase the demand for certain types of facilities. Ultimately, not every Montana State Park can offer everything to everyone, but the system as a whole is large enough so that it can meet a diversity of interests. The anticipated course of action is to support the existing system at the current maintenance standard or better, selectively improve visitor services, and enhance the system with carefully chosen new capital projects and on-going rehabilitation.

**\* ACQUISITIONS:**

- + Aggressively Search for New Acquisition Opportunities
- + *Retain All of Current Land Base, with Option of Adding Carefully Selected Inholdings, Buffer Zones, Top-Priority New Acquisitions, or Unanticipated but High Quality New Opportunities*
- + Maintain All of Current Land Base, with No Expansion (except for selected inholdings, adjacent parcels, or trades)
- + Significant Reduction in System Size and Scope

Funding and political support for major new acquisitions are currently not available, and probably will not emerge in the near future unless there is an unusual opportunity to save a significant resource, a substantial new funding source is developed, or a major funding partner steps forward for a particular project. It would not be prudent to take on significant new sites without secure funding sources and adequate staffing to operate and maintain them. The acquisition of inholdings or key adjacent parcels will remain the highest priority for Montana State Parks into the twenty-first century.

However, if Montana's population and out-of-state visitation continue to increase as expected--along with participation in various outdoor recreation activities--support may grow for the acquisition of high-priority sites in order to help disperse use and/or preserve important resources. Additionally, there are likely to be more opportunities to work cooperatively with other agencies in managing various recreation sites throughout Montana.



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2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

**\* MEETING RECREATIONAL DEMANDS:**

- + Move Aggressively to Meet New Recreational Demands
- + Modest, Incremental Change to Meet Some New Needs, as Appropriate
- + Focus Mainly on Traditional Types of Uses--Little Response to Changing Demands

The Montana State Park system does not have to meet every new recreational demand; there are other public and private sector providers who are in better position to meet certain types of new needs. As recreational technology continues to change more quickly, however, there is likely to be more pressure to adapt the system to new activities. Conversely, a situation might arise where some types of current uses may no longer be appropriate. In the face of increasing change, the defacto policy of the Parks Division has been gradual, incremental change to meet selected new needs; this approach is likely to continue.

Accommodating new demands should be seriously considered when resources can be protected, funding and staffing are available, and conflicts between visitors are minimal. Because of the wide range of park types, potential new uses at parks need to be considered on a site-by-site basis, assuming they are compatible with the goals of the system as a whole. Growing numbers of seniors and disabled citizens, minority visitors, and foreign tourists will also place new demands on Montana State Parks. Additionally, meeting the recreational needs of families will continue to be a focus, while more attention needs to be directed at ensuring that low-income Montanans have improved access to a range of outdoor recreational activities close to their homes.

**\* PARKS PROGRAMS AND STAFFING:**

- + Significant New Program Development and Staffing Increases
- + Stable FTE Levels or Gradual Increases, with Incremental Adjustments to Programs and Increased Cooperative Efforts Across Divisions, Between Agencies, and with the Private Sector
- + Scale Back Existing Programs/Reduce Staffing

Given present funding and political trends, maintaining something resembling the current mix of programs and staffing is the most likely option for the next several years; beyond that, potential economic and political changes make predictions very difficult. Some areas of potential expansion include the following: interpretation and education (especially for youth); water-based recreation management and planning; more focus on family opportunities; additional support for the non-motorized Trails Program; assistance with the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial; and possible future involvement with Virginia and Nevada Cities. The internal

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2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

transfer of program responsibility and staff within a division or from one division to another is always a possibility, and may not be directly linked to specific outside trends or forces.

Current demands on existing Parks Program full-time equivalent (FTE) staff are high, with too few people available to do the necessary work. Barring a major reduction in the size of the park system, the need for more FTE is likely to remain. However, substantial new staff increases and/or programs would require strong legislative and constituent support. The addition of new FTE has been difficult in the past, and there are currently no indications that this will change significantly in the near future. The current number of FTE places severe limitations on the Division's ability to successfully implement new programs, or assume management of new sites.

**\* FEES AND FUNDING:**

+ *Investigate New Types of User Fees and Aggressively Search for Outside Alternative Funding Sources*

+Maintain Current Fee and Funding Structure, with Adjustments only as these funds naturally inflate

+Reduce Fees and/or Reliance on Outside Funding Sources

There is an urgent need to investigate and pursue more secure, long-term funding sources which are less vulnerable to fluctuations in the larger political and economic environment. Foundation and support group help, new user/and or commercial use fees, and other funding options should all be explored. The tourism industry has the potential to be an important ally in developing alternative funding sources. The health of the State Park System and the Parks Division will remain subject to volatile outside forces if the current fee and funding structure remains in place into the twenty-first century. Continuing to nurture support for the fee system is critical, as is setting the groundwork for reasonable, regular fee increases (e.g., every five years). While fees have become a more important component of State Park finances, Program staff are committed to continuing to provide excellent value for visitors, with fees in line with regional averages.



*Executive Summary*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Looking Toward 2020:**  
**Outcomes, Issues, Goals, and Policies**

**Parks Program Outcomes**

Four major outcome areas have been developed for Parks Programs. Outcomes are the final results of a program or project, as assessed by the people who are the intended recipients. To measure the outcome of a new state park brochure, for example, it would be necessary to determine whether the users found it useful or interesting, rather than just merely stating that the project was completed and so many copies were printed. Parks program outcome areas are as follows:

**Outcome 1: Protection and Enhancement of Resources:** *A parks program where natural, historical, and recreational resources are enhanced and protected in perpetuity.*

**Outcome 2: Exceeding Visitor Expectations:** *A parks program where visitor expectations are met or exceeded due to the quality of the natural and cultural resources, recreational opportunities, facilities, programs, and staff.*

**Outcome 3: Education and Interpretation:** *A parks program which provides outstanding education and interpretation of Montana's natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and the conservation issues which face them.*

**Outcome 4: Tourism and Economic Stability:** *A parks program which contributes to Montana's tourism industry and general economic stability, in a manner which is sustainable for the system's key resources.*

Each of the goals listed in the following section should ultimately reflect on one or more of the four outcomes. In addition to the outcomes, specific performance measures have been developed to periodically measure and assess whether projects and programs are working, which in turn will influence budget allocations. In order to successfully achieve these Parks Program outcomes and manage an excellent state park system, there will need to be close, on-going, inter-disciplinary cooperation with staff from throughout the agency.

*Executive Summary*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

## **Issues and Goals**

Identifying and prioritizing the many issues facing Montana State Parks is one of the main goals of this Plan. Each issue listed below refers to a significant park-related problem or opportunity identified during the planning process by the public or park staff. Issues and goals have been categorized under six major topics: planning; policy; operations, management, and maintenance; communication and coordination; funding and fees; and administrative.

### **Planning**

#### **Issue: Configuration and Coverage of the State Park System**

**Goal:** *A state park system which reflects the geographic, natural, cultural, and recreational diversity of Montana, and adequately addresses the needs and desires of park users. Some of the potential future needs discussed in the Plan include additional park(s) in eastern Montana; a recreational riverway system with designated camp sites; and enhanced trail management, including rail-trails and historic trails.*

#### **Issue: Conservation of Park Resources**

**Goal:** *Ensure that park use, management, and development are consistent with what the resources can support, and that important resources are protected. In addition, the Division must work cooperatively with other public and private land owners to limit impacts from surrounding activities on park resources.*

#### **Issue: State Park Management Plans**

**Goal:** *Complete a management plan for every park in the system. Parks with existing management plans should be updated at intervals which are no longer than ten years. Completed management plans will typically be followed by more detailed site development plans, as appropriate.*

#### **Issue: Park Design and Development**

**Goal:** *Ensure that park design and development are appropriate for the site environment, and are shaped by solid information on both recreational demands and site characteristics.*

### **Policy**

#### **Issue: Commercial Use of Park Sites**

**Goal:** *Obtain better information on the types and extent of commercial use occurring at state parks and fishing access sites. Based on an analysis of this information and the results of*

*Executive Summary*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

*current internal discussions on this issue, the Division should begin implementing fair and consistent state-wide policies toward commercial use, while still allowing for regional flexibility.*

**Issue: Role of Private Sector**

**Goal:** *Develop a clearer, more efficient process for determining whether planning, engineering, maintenance and other services will be done internally, or contracted out. Irrespective of whether particular types of work are performed by the public or private sector, the ultimate goal is to provide the best service for the public in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.*

**Issue: Water-based Recreation and Management**

**Goal:** *The roles and responsibilities of the Parks Division and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) as a whole need to be further defined in respect to management of water-based recreation, both inside and outside the boundaries of state parks.*

**Operations, Management, and Maintenance**

**Issue: Crime, Vandalism, and Enforcement**

**Goal:** *Work internally and cooperatively with the Enforcement Division and law enforcement agencies to improve visitor and employee safety, and reduce crime, vandalism, and non-compliance at Montana State Parks.*

**Issue: Standards--Design, Operations, Maintenance, and Safety**

**Goal:** *Utilize design, construction, operations, maintenance, and safety standards to improve resource protection, serve public and staff needs, and promote greater efficiency.*

**Issue: Education, Interpretation, and Special Events**

**Goal:** *Work with the FWP Conservation Education Division and other partners to develop a more consistent and comprehensive approach towards education, interpretation, and special events in Montana State Parks.*

**Issue: Volunteers and Interns**

**Goal:** *Continue to maintain, improve, and expand volunteer and intern programs, while working with the regions and other FWP Divisions to share more of the administrative duties.*



*Executive Summary*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Communication and Coordination**

**Issue: Civic Organizations, Support Groups, Tourism Associations and Other Partners**

**Goal:** *Work to ensure there is continued and enhanced communication and cooperation between Montana State Parks and local communities, support groups, tourism organizations, and other organized parties with an interest in state parks.*

**Issue: Communication/Cooperation Within and Between Agencies**

**Goal:** *Continue to improve communication and cooperation within the Parks Program, between the Parks Program and other internal programs, and between the Parks Program and other agencies involved with resource management, recreation, and tourism.*

**Issue: Visitor Information**

**Goal:** *Work to more systematically provide park visitors with the information they need for an informative and enjoyable visit.*

**Funding and Fees**

**Issue: Park Program Funding Sources**

**Goal:** *Establish adequate and stable long-term funding sources for Montana State Parks.*

**Issue: Parks Program Fees**

**Goal:** *Work to maintain a fee system which is equitable, efficient, and adequately addresses the revenue needs of the system.*

**Administrative**

**Issue: Parks Program Staffing**

**Goal:** *Work to secure adequate staffing for the Parks Program.*

**Issue: Monitoring Visitation and Visitor Experience**

**Goal:** *Continue to improve the quality of state park visitor experiences through better monitoring and data collection.*

**Issue: Programmatic Outcomes, Performance-based Budgeting, and Six-Year Plans**

**Goal:** *Fully integrate programmatic outcomes and performance-based budgeting into Division planning processes. Complete a Six-Year Plan designed to more specifically identify and implement the top priorities included here.*

*Executive Summary*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Issue: Parks Program/FWP Decision-Making Hierarchy**

**Goal:** *Work to clarify Parks Program decision-making processes and lines of authority, within the larger context of FWP.*

## **State Park Program Policy Statements and Values**

A variety of policy statements were compiled as part of 2020 Vision; in some cases these are summaries of existing policies, in other cases they are “new” policies which reflect current practices, in still others they anticipate emerging or potential problems. The intent is to have a complete set of policy guidance in one place for easy reference.

The policy statements deal with too many varied and complex issues to be adequately summarized in this executive summary. Ultimately, however, they are derived from the values which have contributed to the past achievements of Montana’s State Parks Program, and which staff will continue to rely on to ensure future success, as follows:

- \* Customer orientation.
- \* Involve the public in key decisions.
- \* Dedicated to resource enhancement and protection.
- \* Behave with honesty, fairness, accountability, and integrity.
- \* Value healthy Montana families, communities, and a sustainable economy.
- \* Understand and appreciate the value of resource education and interpretation.
- \* Team players oriented toward cooperative endeavors, with a variety of partners.
- \* Continuous improvement via training, technology, resourcefulness, and other tools.

The foundation is solid, but there is more to be done: Please help us work for you in building an even better Montana State Park system, one we can all enjoy and feel proud of next year and in the year 2020!





# I

## INTRODUCTION

2020 Vision for Montana State Parks examines where the Montana State Park System has been, assesses where it is now, and suggests where it ought to be going through the year 2020. While drawing from earlier planning efforts, 2020 Vision is the most comprehensive effort to date to use public and agency input to help chart a long-term course for the Montana State Park System.

2020 Vision is intended to be a general, system-wide planning and policy document for Montana State Parks, which will be followed by more specific six year action plans designed to implement recommendations. At a more detailed level, park-specific plans will be developed or revised in a manner which is consistent with the direction in 2020 Vision and the six year plans.

The purpose of Montana's State Park System is to protect key natural resources, preserve important aspects of Montana's history and culture, offer outdoor recreation opportunities, educate and inform visitors about the state's resources, and provide economic benefits for communities near park sites, primarily through tourism. The mission of Montana's State Parks hasn't changed significantly since the system was established in 1939, but the importance of this work has--if anything--increased over time. The system is heavily used by Montana residents, and provides a key set of attractions for the nearly 8 million non-residents who visit the state each year.

Montana's 41 state parks play a different role than their counterparts in many other states, in part because of the substantial amount of federal land ownership (See appendix A for locations and descriptions). While Montana State Parks are sometimes overshadowed by the presence of Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks--as well as by large amounts of Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property--the system preserves a vital part of Montana's natural, cultural, and recreational heritage. Montana State Parks are diverse, ranging from nationally significant sites such as Bannack ghost town near Dillon, to parks that are mainly of regional or local significance, such as Lake Elmo near Billings and Spring Meadow Lake in Helena.

The Parks Division is one of seven divisions within the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). In addition to being responsible for state parks, the Parks Division also manages a number of other recreation-related programs such as trails and fishing access sites. Although these programs are housed in the Parks Division, they have connections to program elements elsewhere in FWP, as does the State Parks Program.

*Chapter I: Introduction*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

It is worth noting that--while the wide array of activities the Parks Division is involved with are discussed here--this document is not intended to be a strategic plan for the Division as a whole. The focus of 2020 Vision is on the parks themselves, the State Parks Program, and its connections to other programs both inside and outside of FWP. Various other Divisional responsibilities and programs are summarized in the Plan, but mainly from the perspective of how they relate to the State Park System. Separate planning documents have been completed or are in progress for some of the other programs within the Division (e.g., Trails Program, Fishing Access Site Program).

Because of its history during the past few decades, it is an appropriate time to take an in-depth, long-term look at the direction of the Montana State Park System. The parks system expanded rapidly during the late 1960s and 1970s, driven by new funding sources for land acquisition (e.g., the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the State Coal Tax). After this expansion, the Division experienced severe financial constraints through the 1980s, and was unable to adequately fund the system's development and maintenance needs.

In the early 1990s, the Parks Division was forced to cut back the number of units in the system because it could not adequately maintain them. While the sites transferred out of the system remained open to the public under different management, the shift significantly changed the size and character of the Montana State Park System. The smaller system, combined with improved funding levels in the 1990s, enabled the Division to chip away at a large maintenance backlog and improve the quality of the remaining sites.

As the park system approaches the millennium, it is characterized by relative stability, enhanced maintenance, incremental improvement through capital projects, and high visitor satisfaction levels. The fundamental question is--now that many of the problems facing the system in the 1980s have been addressed--where do Montanans as well as non-resident visitors want Montana State Parks to be headed through the year 2020?

Examples of the types of questions this Plan will address include the following: "What is the appropriate size of the system? Are there unique, unprotected resources which should be preserved as state parks? What are the threats to parks in the system? Are there units currently in the system which probably shouldn't be state parks? What types of development levels and recreational activities are appropriate? What legislation and policy directs the way the system is managed?"

In addition to grappling with the kinds of parks-related issues listed above, the Parks Division also participated in a Department-wide examination of the agency's organizational structure and operating procedures, and began moving toward new ways of defining and measuring

*Chapter I: Introduction*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

success. As part of this exercise, a new agency vision statement was adopted, along with new planning and budget allocation processes. One goal of the reorganization was to help the FWP function more “programmatically,” with enhanced communication and cooperation between various parts of the agency. The agency-wide reorganization effort was occurring at the same time 2020 Vision was being drafted, and results from that process are reflected as appropriate.

The first several chapters of this Plan are descriptive; the intent is to give the public and agency staff a better understanding of the history of Montana State Parks and the organizational structure of the Parks Division and FWP. This part of the Plan--along with the appendices and policy statements--will serve as a “one-stop shopping” reference for employees or others who want to learn more about Montana State Parks generally, or have particular questions.

The core of the Plan--the portions which lay out future direction--begins mid-way through and continues through the rest of the document: an assessment is made of the current park system; trends and alternative futures are discussed; issues, goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes laid out; and state park policies are listed. The issues were initially identified through public comments, surveys, staff input, a focus group session, and comments from the FWP Commission; they represent important problems or opportunities the Parks Division must address to maintain and improve the park system into the twenty-first century.

2020 Vision is not intended in itself to resolve all the significant issues facing the system, but it is a vehicle for identifying what the issues are and recommending a course for addressing them. The Plan is meant to be a living, changing vision for a key portion of Montana’s heritage. Its success will depend not only on the care and creativity staff take in implementing it, but also the extent to which park users and political decision-makers take ownership of it, and assist in caring for a resource which belongs to all Montanans. The quality of the Montana State Parks system will reflect, to a large extent, the role Montanans recognize for it, and the importance they place on it.





## II THE PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to develop 2020 Vision for Montana State Parks relied heavily on input from state park users, the general public, and a wide range of Parks Division and other FWP staff members. As described in more detail below, key process steps including the following:

- \* Public Scoping Workshops and Comment Period (1995)
- \* Issues Workshop at Biennial Parks Division Meeting (1995)
- \* Review and Discussion by Helena Park Staff (On-going)
- \* State Park Attitudes Survey (1996)
- \* FWP Commission Briefing/Comments (1996)
- \* Park Program Focus Group (1997)
- \* FWP "Outcomes" Survey (1997)
- \* Parks "Outcomes" Development (1997)
- \* Internal Agency and Commission Review of First Draft (1997-98)
- \* Public Review Draft (1998)
- \* Revision of Draft Based on Comments/Final Plan (1998)

### Public Involvement

#### **Public Scoping Workshops and Comment Period**

In October, 1995, FWP Parks Division staff held a series of nine public scoping workshops on the future of the Montana State Parks System. The primary purpose of the workshops was to ask the public to help identify which issues should be addressed in 2020 Vision for Montana State Parks. A public scoping document was prepared to briefly describe the intent of the Plan and the process used to develop it.

Meetings were held in Helena, Butte, Bozeman, Missoula, Kalispell, Great Falls, Billings, Miles City, and Glasgow. A total of 63 members of the public attended the workshops. Virtually everyone who came contributed at least several issues they felt were significant. Results from all nine meetings were tallied into a master list of issues, which is included in the appendix B.

In addition to the input from the workshops, 33 cards, letters, phone comments, and electronic mail messages were received during the scoping period. Because of their length, many of the comments were condensed, with similar issues organized together. The number of times a particular issue was mentioned were tallied to provide a quantitative basis for comparison. As

*Chapter II: The Planning Process*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

with the meeting results, subpoints and related ideas were listed beneath the main issues. The top ten issues which came out of the scoping meetings are as follows:

- 1) Need more RV dump stations (30 points).
- 2) Protect state park resources (23 points).
- 3) Parks Division should acquire more land (e.g., for new parks, buffer zones, inholdings, viewshed protection, etc.--23 points).
- 4) Don't overdevelop state parks (23 points).
- 5) Utilize volunteers, civic organizations, and support groups (23 points).
- 6) Make better use of differential fee structures (19 points).
- 7) Enhance public ownership of the state park system by increasing awareness and visibility, so parks can be improved, expanded, purchased, etc.(18 points).
- 8) Improve utilization of State School Trust Lands for park purposes (16 points).
- 9) Don't allow any more reductions in the size of the state park system (14 points).
- 10) Develop parks to meet changing public needs and circumstances. Park management and rules will need to change with increases in use (14 points).

The point totals for the meeting and public comments are not based on scientific survey information; rather, they reflect the views of those who showed up at the meetings on particular nights, or took the time to send in comments. Hence, the prioritized lists do not necessarily mirror what a random sample of Montana park users might say, but they did provide initial, general direction on what issues to examine in this Plan.

### **State Park Attitudes Surveys**

The Parks Division contracted with the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) to conduct three surveys for the Plan during the 1996 summer season. The surveys included the following:

- 1) 2,095 resident and non-resident visitor surveys were distributed in 20 state parks throughout the state, with a pre-paid return address envelope for people to mail back.
- 2) A mail-out survey sent to a random selection of 1,500 adult Montanans.
- 3) A mail-out survey sent to a random selection of 500 state park passport holders.

Once the surveys were complete and the returned information tabulated, the Institute compiled a report summarizing and analyzing the results (Nickerson, Sargeant, and Moisse 1996). An

*Chapter II: The Planning Process*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

additional product was a masters thesis on the surveys produced by a University graduate student who helped with the project while employed by the Institute.

Two different surveys were developed, one for distribution to park visitors, and one for the mail-outs. The survey for park visitors was different from the other version mainly in that it was tailored to people with a more detailed knowledge of the park system. Both versions were designed to gather information about a wide range of attitudes about Montana State Parks, including visitation; satisfaction levels; preferences about facilities, programs, and services; resource protection priorities; views about fees and funding options; and other areas of interest and concern. While the surveys produced much more information than can be summarized in this section, a key finding was a high level of satisfaction with both state park staff and the condition of park facilities. More detailed information on the survey results is found later in the Plan and in appendix C.

The summer following the state park surveys (1997), a second set of surveys was developed for Montana residents and passport holders to gather baseline information about Parks Division “outcomes,” the effect Parks Division services actually have on the people which use them. The surveys are intended to be replicated periodically in the future to measure changes in satisfaction with FWP programs.

The outcomes survey also suggested a relatively high level of satisfaction with Montana State Parks among randomly selected adult Montanans. For example, when respondents who indicated they had visited a Montana State Park within the past two years were asked about their experience, 65 percent said they were “very satisfied” and 29 percent stated they were “somewhat satisfied,” with the remainder either “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.” The survey indicated that 62 percent of adult Montanans said they had visited a Montana State Park in the past two years, with 6 percent saying they had purchased a current state parks passport (FWP 1998).

### **Focus Group**

Following analysis of the 1996 survey data, departmental comments, and scoping period input, remaining information gaps were identified. A nine-person focus group was assembled in Bozeman to discuss parks-related topics, Parks Division programs, and a list of draft outcomes which had been developed by staff members.

Focus group participants were selected on the basis of their interest in particular aspects of Parks Division activities; a few individuals were chosen randomly. The State Parks focus



*Chapter II: The Planning Process*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

group--along with two different focus groups for the other FWP Divisions--was facilitated by a consultant, who also produced a report on the sessions.

Following the focus group, outcomes and Plan recommendations were reevaluated based on the discussion.

### **Public Review of Draft Plan**

A preliminary draft Plan was produced for initial agency and Commission review, prior to being revised and released for the current public comment period. The Division used the media and standard Departmental notification procedures to ensure widespread awareness of the Plan. Based on public comments, the draft Plan will be revised and released as a final version later in 1998.

### **Agency Involvement**

#### **Parks Division Meeting Workshops**

As part of the biennial Parks staff meeting in September 1995, workshops were held to gather input on priority Plan issues from Parks Division employees. The format for the workshops was similar to the one used for the public scoping meetings, including an opportunity to "vote" on priority issues.

After the workshops, votes were tallied and issues prioritized into a list of the top 30 issues. The results from the staff meetings were somewhat different than the public workshops in that there was more focus on Parks Division issues, rather than just the park system. Following the Division meeting, the results from the 2020 Vision workshops were compiled into a report, which was sent to every Division employee (see appendix B).

### **Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission**

The Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission is a body appointed by the Governor to make decisions on key policy matters affecting resources the Department manages. The primary rationale behind the Commission is to enhance FWP's accountability to the public.



*Chapter II: The Planning Process*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The Parks Division Administrator provided Commission members with a briefing on the Plan early in the process. In addition to receiving information about the Plan and having an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions, Commission members were given the chance to comment on a separate survey form. The focus of the survey was to identify priority issues for inclusion in the Plan, as well as issues to be included in the ITRR survey. The results of this exercise are also included in the Appendix.

Members of the Commission also received copies of the draft Plan to review before it was released to the public.

### **FWP Staff**

Parks Division staff members took the lead in developing the planning process, discussing key issues, collecting information, and writing and reviewing the Plan.

In addition to the input discussed above, a variety of other information sources were utilized by Helena staff as research material, including (but not limited to) the following:

- \* Earlier system-wide plans, studies, and surveys done by the Division.
- \* Existing state park management plans.
- \* Current data on visitation and other areas collected by the Division.
- \* Management plans completed for other state park systems.
- \* National and state-wide trends affecting outdoor recreation, natural and cultural resources, and state parks.
- \* A Division project to map park boundaries, key resources, and facilities. Part of this work involved assembling a comprehensive data base on the facilities in each park.
- \* Information compiled by other agencies and organizations about key natural, cultural, and recreational resources in the state.

Prior to public review, a preliminary draft of 2020 Vision was circulated broadly throughout FWP, and every permanent employee in the Parks Division received a copy to review. Comments on the internal review draft were received from employees throughout the agency.

*Chapter II: The Planning Process*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Public review plans for 2020 Vision were coordinated with the Fisheries and Wildlife Divisions, which were simultaneously doing strategic plans of their own.

## **A Programmatic Approach: FWP Reorganization Initiative**

In the mid-1990s, FWP management began initiating a number of organizational and operational changes which affected all the divisions in the agency, as well as parts of the process used to develop this plan. Key focus areas of the reorganization included the establishment of “program committees” designed to improve communication between various components of the agency; a comprehensive analysis of FWP’s organizational structure, with recommendations for selected changes; the development of a new agency vision statement and decision-making process; and a move toward performance-based budgeting and the development of program outcomes and performance measures. These larger agency-wide issues will be discussed in more detail, as appropriate, at various points in this Plan.

A major theme throughout this process was a desire to make the agency function more programmatically. In the case of the Parks Program, for example, what this means is a greater recognition that resources from throughout FWP are required to make the program successful. Thinking programmatically is a way of helping to dissolve boundaries between FWP divisions which may inhibit inter-disciplinary teamwork. The vision is one of an agency with cross-divisional links supporting strong programs, rather than an agency in which individual divisions operate as separate fiefdoms with few ties to each other. The long-term goal is to have programmatic thinking become an integral part of the agency culture, a mind set for all employees.

## **Plan Implementation and Monitoring:** **Outcomes and Six-Year Plans**

### **Outcomes and Performance-Based Budgeting**

As summarized above, the Parks Division and the rest of the agency began moving toward a performance-based budgeting, outcomes approach in 1997, after several years of discussion. This effort represents a fundamentally different way of defining and measuring the success of agency programs, including Montana State Parks.

*Chapter II: The Planning Process*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

In the past, program success was typically measured by looking at the relationship between “inputs” (i.e., how much time and/or money the product or service required) and “outputs” (i.e., how many goods and services were produced). For the Parks Division, outputs could be things as diverse as the number of boat ramps constructed, brochures printed, or interpretive programs given.

While not ignoring inputs and outputs, an outcomes approach focuses more attention on the actual effects of FWP programs (more detailed discussion of planning terms is included in appendix D). One way of measuring parks-related outcomes, for example, would be to periodically conduct surveys of park visitors to track their level of satisfaction with various programs and services over time. The extent to which users measurably benefit from a particular facility or service, in turn, will help define successful performance and shape future budget decisions.

Many important results can not be measured by public surveys; rather, they are gauged by internal historical, cultural, ecological, economic and recreational assessments. Examples of some of these could include such diverse endeavors as tracking changes in historic buildings through time-series photographs, measuring streambank erosion, monitoring populations of plants and animals, or periodically documenting the impacts recreational use is having on vegetation adjacent to a campground. Ideally, there would be baseline information collected before a project or program was started, and then regular follow-ups to assess whether the work was successful.

In sum, successfully implementing the outcomes process will require the regular use of various types of measurement to monitor how successfully the public and agency staff believe FWP has been in administering its programs and--more specifically--how successful the Parks Division has been in implementing the recommendations in this plan and the shorter-range six-year plan discussed below.

## **Six-Year Plans**

This long-range State Park System Plan will be followed by a more specific six-year plan, which will be the primary vehicle for identifying short and medium-term implementation priorities.

The differences between the System Plan and the Six-Year Plan are largely based on time frame and specificity of focus. The Six-Year Plan will address the highest priorities from the System Plan; define quantifiable objectives and six-year capital projects; lay out specific strategies and a time table for achieving them; discuss the budgetary and personnel trade-offs

*Chapter II: The Planning Process*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

necessary to be successful; and state specific performance measures to help determine whether initiatives have been successful, based on an outcomes approach. At an even more specific level, annual work plans will describe in detail the actual work and budget necessary to achieve the objectives identified in the Six-Year Plan.

The State Park System Plan should be revised upon completion of each Six-Year Plan. The System Plan will be completely redone when it is determined that incremental revisions are no longer sufficient to keep pace with changing conditions.



### III

## MISSION AND HISTORY OF THE PARK SYSTEM

### Mission and Legislative Authority

The foundation for the Montana State Park System was established by enabling legislation passed by the 1939 Legislature. According to the legislation, the basis for the State Park System was as follows:

*For the purpose of conserving the scenic, historic, archaeologic, scientific, and recreational resources of the state and providing for their use and enjoyment, thereby contributing to the cultural, recreational, and economic life of the people and their health... (MCA 23-1-101).*

The original enabling legislation captures a number of themes which remain relevant today: conservation of Montana's natural and cultural resources; the provision and protection of outdoor recreational opportunities; and an economic development role, which today is primarily through tourism. One activity which is implied in these broad statements but not explicitly mentioned is an education and interpretation component, which has become increasingly important since the park system was authorized.

Overall, the mission of the Montana State Parks System is similar to the role defined for state parks in many other states. The mission is different from that of Federal agencies such as the Forest Service and BLM in that state parks typically lack a broad multiple use mandate, although activities such as leased grazing do occur on some Montana State Park lands. In addition, state park systems often offer a higher level of development than what is found with Forest Service and BLM sites. In respect to development, state parks tend to occupy an intermediary role between the Forest Service and BLM, on the one hand, and the private sector on the other.

As with National Park Service (NPS) lands, there is a strong focus on resource preservation, education, and interpretation, although tourism and economic development tend to be more integral to the mission of state parks as a whole than with the NPS. Montana State Parks remain relatively undeveloped compared to systems in many other states, but from a nationwide perspective, state parks offer a much broader array of recreational opportunities than federally-managed sites, including some activities more typically found in parks managed by local governments (e.g., golf courses, tennis courts, etc.).

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

In order to carry out its mission, the Legislature has given FWP--operating under the guidance of the FWP Commission--a number of specific powers and responsibilities, as set forth under Title 23 of the Montana Codes Annotated (MCA). Some of the most significant include the following:

**\* RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND ACQUISITION:** “The Department shall make a study to determine the scenic, historic, archaeologic, scientific, and recreational resources of the state and may...acquire for the state any areas, sites, or objects which in its opinion should be held as state parks...” (MCA 23-1-102).

**\* FEES AND CHARGES:** “The Department shall have power to levy and collect reasonable fees or other charges...and to grant concessions as it considers advisable...” (MCA 23-1-105).

**\* RULES, RESOURCE PROTECTION, AND ENFORCEMENT:** “The Department may make rules governing the use, occupancy, and protection of the lands and property under its control...the Department shall enforce provisions of this chapter...” (MCA 23-1-106). Furthermore, “the Department is authorized to establish a corps of park rangers...who must be qualified...in the protection, conservation, and stewardship of the natural and cultural resources and parks administered by the Department” (MCA 23-1-121).

**\* PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF OUTDOOR RECREATION**

**RESOURCES:** In addition to authority specific to state parks, FWP has been granted some broader powers by the Legislature to “plan and develop outdoor recreational resources in the state, which authority shall permit receiving and expending funds including federal grants for this purpose” (MCA 23-2-101). Examples of recreational grant programs managed by the Parks Division include the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA), the State Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Grant Program, and the State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program. To remain eligible for LWCF funding, the Parks Division has completed a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for Montana at five year intervals.

**\* SMITH RIVER:** FWP has been granted specific authority to manage recreational floating on the Smith River (MCA 23-2-401). The Smith River is the only waterway in the state where the Department has the authority to limit the amount of recreational use. A permit system limited to nine launch parties per day is currently in place.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

In summary, the Legislature has granted FWP--acting through the Parks Division--the authority to plan for and manage the park system, acquire new units, establish fees and regulate concessions, and enforce rules and regulations. In addition, the Division has recreational planning and management responsibilities which transcend the park system, including the administration of various recreation-related grant programs, and unique water recreation management responsibilities for the Smith River.

The Legislature has specifically given the FWP Commission oversight authority in a number of areas, as listed below:

- \* The Commission establishes the rules of the Department governing the use of lands owned or controlled by FWP (MCA 87-1-301-1-c).
- \* The Commission has rulemaking authority governing recreational use on the Smith River (from Camp Baker to Eden Bridge--MCA 23-2-408).
- \* The Commission approves all acquisitions or transfers by the Department involving interests in land or water (MCA 87-1-301-1-e).
- \* The Commission has broad authority to set the policies of the Department (MCA 87-1-301-1-a).
- \* The Commission is required to approve all land transactions (and the State Board of Land Commissioners must subsequently sanction all transactions of more than 100 acres or \$100,000 in value--MCA 87-1-209).

In summary, both the Department and Commission have separately-stated authority to set user fees and make rules for State Parks. For this reason, the Department and Commission jointly adopt all park fees and rules, whether these are annual rules or rules adopted under the Montana Administrative Procedures Act (ARM Rules).

## **History of the Park System and Key Legislation**

### **Overview**

The Montana State Park System has had a long and circuitous history. Montana State Parks were influenced by the nation-wide movement to create state park systems that began in the 1920s, but Montana shared with other western states a set of circumstances which made the



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

challenges different than in other parts of the country such as the East and Midwest. Montana's sparse population, large land area, and small tax base--combined with a high percentage of federally owned land--helped create a different role and political climate for the state park system than was the case in some other states. In addition, some of the most spectacular large-scale natural areas and tourist attractions were already preserved as part of the National Park System (e.g., Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks).

Montana State Parks went through a slow, decades-long building process after Lewis and Clark Caverns was designated as the first state park in 1936, and the system was authorized in 1939 with the creation of a three person State Parks Commission. In the early years, system expansion was gradual, budgets low, and staff support minimal. The system didn't receive its first legislative appropriation until 1947, when it began making property acquisitions. However, resources became stretched; the Legislature grew concerned about the deficits, and turned management of the system over to the State Highway Commission in 1953.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, major new parks-related funding sources became available which fundamentally changed the nature of the system. In 1963, the Legislature authorized the use of taxes collected from motorboat fuel purchases for water-based park developments. Even more significant, Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in 1964, which would make available many millions of dollars for state parks, as well as other parks and recreation projects.

In part because of this new infusion of funding, State Parks were transferred to the Department of Fish and Game in 1965, a major turning point for the system. The new funding and organizational structure enabled the park system to begin expanding more rapidly than it had in the past. According to a draft history of the system,

*For the first time in the history of the state, the Legislature established a state park program within an agency that had not only the responsibility for several recreation programs of statewide importance and field offices to carry them out, but also several sources of funding to support the system as well. The state park program now had access to the state general fund, income from the gasoline tax for boating access sites (pending a court test), what would soon amount to millions of dollars in matching funds from the federal LWCF program, fishing licence dollars for fishing access sites, and the potential exclusive use of parks earned revenue...A new era had dawned on the Montana State Park System (Conklin 1978).*

Another major new funding source was added when the Division gained access to a percentage of Coal Tax receipts in 1975. With help from this funding source acquisition of additional properties continued, but the new parks--combined with increased use and infrastructure



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

needs--began to seriously strain the maintenance capabilities in the Division and threaten the resources in the system. This was exacerbated by the loss of general tax support in the mid 1980s, and the dramatic decline in the LWCF federal grants which occurred during the same period. A special committee (Parks Futures Committee) was appointed by the Agency Director in 1989 to assess the situation and report back to the Governor and Legislature in 1990 with suggested solutions.

Based on the Committee's recommendations, the FWP Commission adopted an entrance fee system, with legislative direction. Faced with an increasingly severe amount of deferred maintenance and development needs, the Department also made the difficult decision to cut back the system in order to focus on core properties. Additionally, there were also extensive efforts to increase funding for historic preservation, capital infrastructure, maintenance and staffing. These changes helped restore the health of the system, but not all the recommendations of the Committee were adopted (e.g., recommended funding levels, FTE increases, etc.).

By the mid-1990s, a smaller system and improved funding levels (e.g., access to Accommodation Tax funds, additional coal tax, highway fuel tax funds, and other sources) enabled the Department to make significant inroads on the deferred maintenance and enhancement needs which had accumulated during the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, visitor services improved, residents started returning in large numbers, and visitation in general began to grow, which benefited local and state-wide economies.

While unmet needs remained, the renewed health of the system suggested that it would be an appropriate time to pause and assess which direction Montana State Parks should be moving as it entered the twenty-first century.

## **Chronology**

Listed below, by date, are some of the key pieces of legislation and history which shaped the development of the Montana State Park System:

### **1929:**

\* State Forester Rutledge Parker and the Montana Kiwanis Clubs sponsored a bill in the 1929 Legislature to establish a state park system. At the time, there were questions about whether a state park system was necessary, and Legislators were concerned that state parks might remove large areas of land from traditional stock uses.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* As a result of these concerns, a compromise bill passed naming the State Forester as the Director of State Parks, and authorizing the State Board of Land Commissioners the right to reserve and establish state parks. However, no appropriations were made to acquire or develop parks; it was a potential system with no budget.

**1936:**

\* By resolution of the Land Board on July 29, 1936, Lewis and Clark Caverns--which previously had been a national monument-- became Montana's first state park.

\* Prior to the designation, a 200 person Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was brought to the site to begin making improvements at the future park.

**1939:**

\* The 1939 Legislature established a three-person State Park Commission, which was given the authority to establish a state park system, including the power to acquire land for park purposes, establish fees, grant concessions, make and enforce rules, accept federal aid, and establish a separate fund for state parks. However, there was still no funding appropriated to purchase land or develop facilities, and Lewis and Clark Caverns remained the only park in the system.

\* The State Highway Department was given the authority to build access roads to state parks.

\* The State Parks Commission authorized the Caverns to begin charging tour fees of \$.75 per adult and \$.25 per child.

**1947:**

\* Montana State Parks received its first legislative appropriation in 1947.

\* During this period, revenue generated from Lewis and Clark Caverns enabled the State Park Commission to hire a full-time park director, Walter Rankin, who began looking for new park lands.

\* Four new parks were donated to the state and added to the system: Lone Pine, Missouri Headwaters, Yellow Bay, and Bitterroot Lake (now an affiliated land).

**1953:**

\* Ashley Roberts was appointed as the new State Park Director.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* The park system operated at a deficit; some parks were closed, with planned developments at others deferred until later.
- \* In an attempt to consolidate state entities and deal with the financial problems, the Legislature abolished the State Parks Commission, and transferred management of the system to the State Highway Commission, with a \$45,000 annual budget.
- \* In the years following the transfer of the system to the Highway Commission, a number of new sites were added with the minimal funding available, including Bannack, Medicine Rocks, Canyon Ferry, Makoshika, and Chief Plenty Coups.

**1963:**

- \* The Legislature enacted a law requiring that all state park earned revenues be deposited into the general fund.
- \* Motorboat fuel tax revenues were separated out from general gas tax revenues (1 % of total), and allocated for boating-related park developments.
- \* The growing emphasis on water use was moving Montana State Parks--which was still part of the State Highway Commission--closer to the interests of the Fish and Game Commission. Similarly, the Fish and Game Commission was becoming more involved in recreation management, and was able to spend funds on developing fishing and boating facilities in state parks.

**1964:**

- \* Congress established the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a major new funding source which provided nation-wide funding of up to \$900 million annually for natural resource and recreation projects, including state parks.
- \* The Department of Fish and Game was preparing to manage the expected flow of LWCF dollars into the state, and assumed management responsibilities for recreational development of Montana's land and water resources. The LWCF Program created another financial link between Montana State Parks and the Department of Fish and Game.

**1965:**

- \* Management of Montana's State Parks was moved to the Department of Fish and Game. The Department organized a new Recreation, Parks, and Research Division according to existing Fish and Game districts. Wes Woodgerd directed the new division, while Ashley Roberts--working under him--remained State Park Director.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* The Legislature added Madison Buffalo Jump to the State Park system.
- \* The Legislature granted Fish and Game the responsibility for allocating motorboat fuel tax receipts, and designated it as the managing authority for LWCF dollars.
- \* In anticipation of LWCF funds, a Montana Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee was established to begin planning state-wide recreation priorities. In order to be eligible to receive LWCF money, the Department completed the first State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which was required to be updated every five years.

**1966:**

- \*The Recreation, Parks, and Research Division assumed responsibility for preserving various Montana historic sites.
- \* The first regional parks manager was hired.

**1967:**

- \* The Legislature revoked the 1963 law requiring all state park earned revenue to be deposited in the state general fund.

**1969:**

- \* The Fish and Game Commission authorized the first camping fees--a \$1.00 per night for camping, with a \$10.00 per year annual camping pass available for Montana residents.
- \* The first snowmobile registration law was passed, providing funding for a rapidly growing type of trail use.
- \* The Department of Fish and Game acquired the authority to name or rename state parks.
- \* Typical notions of what a state park entailed were redefined by linear corridor parks such as the system of Missouri River access sites and the Sluice Boxes.

**1973:**

- \* Camping fees were raised to \$2.00 per night at Flathead Lake sites, all Region 2 parks (west-central Montana), and Lewis and Clark Caverns.



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**1975:**

- \* As a reflection of growing public interest in state parks, the 1975 Legislature established the Coal Tax, and earmarked 2.5% of the receipts for park acquisitions. With this additional funding--combined with the LWCF dollars--new acquisitions were made that would eventually begin to outstrip the Department's management and maintenance capabilities.
- \* Ron Holliday took over as Parks Director.
- \* A new Fish and Game Planning Division began developing a comprehensive plan for all of the department's divisions.

**1976:**

- \* Missouri Headwaters State Park was designated as one of the United States Bicentennial Commemorative Parks, and received a \$250,000 development appropriation.
- \* Bannack held one of the first special events in the system, a series of programs which would expand greatly during the next twenty years.
- \* The Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor was established, providing public-private cooperation in managing a 26 mile (mostly privately-owned) stretch of the river.

**1977:**

- \* The Division began offering State Golden Year Passes to resident senior citizens for \$1.00, enabling them to camp free for life in Montana State Parks.
- \* The Fish and Game Department, which had managed the National Historic Preservation Program, turned these responsibilities over to the Montana Historic Society.

**1979:**

- \* System-wide camping fees were raised to \$2.00 for undeveloped sites and \$3.00 for developed sites at all parks with overnight fees.
- \* The price of the annual camping pass was raised to \$20.00.

**1982:**

- \*The State Parks budget suffered a severe loss when state LWCF funding dropped to zero, after reaching a high of \$3.4 million in 1979.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* In addition to the loss of federal LWCF funding, Montana State Government suffered a decline of general tax funds during the 1980s, and the ensuing budget crises had a major negative impact on the Parks Division.

\* The Legislature passed a law which provided the Parks Division with a percentage of the gas tax for the snowmobile program.

**1983:**

\* The price of the annual camping pass was raised to \$25.00.

\* Lake Elmo State Park was acquired.

\* Don Hyyppa succeeded Ron Holliday as Parks Division Director.

**1984:**

\* At Wayfarers and Yellow Bay, day use entrance fees were established at \$1.00 per vehicle. Annual vehicle entrance decals were made available for \$10.00. Camping fees were raised from \$2.00 to \$3.00 at undeveloped sites, and from \$3.00 to \$5.00 for developed sites.

\* Federal Wallop-Breaux legislation was passed by Congress, which enabled a percentage of motorboat fuel tax revenues to be used to improve water-based state parks.

**1985:**

\* Cost the of annual state-wide camping pass was raised to \$35.00.

\* A free camping pass is offered to disabled Montana residents.

\* At Whitefish Lake, day use entrance fees were established at \$1.00 per vehicle, with a \$10.00 annual entrance vehicle decal made available.

**1986:**

\* The Legislature transferred three years of parks' future coal tax revenue to the state general fund; parks trust interest earnings were diverted solely to maintenance. Combined with the dramatic decline in LWCF funding, the Division was forced to relinquish management responsibilities for a significant amount of properties across the state. Rock Creek and Bear's Paw Battleground were among the initial parks transferred to other public land management agencies during this period of downsizing.

\* The Parks Division Design and Construction Bureau was transferred to Field Services in

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

order to provide services to the entire Department.

- \* At Big Arm, a \$1.00 entrance fee was established, in addition to a \$10.00 annual vehicle decal.

- \* Legislation was passed protecting the historic Anaconda Smoke Stack, which became part of the State Park System.

**1987:**

- \* The Legislature eliminated all remaining General Fund support for Montana State Parks. In a two year period, there was a net loss of \$1 million per year from Coal Tax and General Fund revenues combined, severely impacting park maintenance and improvements.

- \* The use of volunteers and partnerships emerged as increasingly critical tools to help keep the park system afloat amidst severe budget cutbacks.

- \* Big Arm and Yellow Bay were dropped as fee areas. Entrance fees at Wayfarers and Whitefish Lake were increased to \$2.00 per vehicle, with the price of an annual entrance decal set at \$12.00.

- \* Entrance fees were established at the Makoshika Rifle Range, as follows: \$1.00 per person, a \$10.00 annual pass for individuals, and a \$20.00 per family pass.

- \* An annual non-resident state park camping pass was offered for \$70.00.

**1988:**

- \* The annual season camping pass was discontinued, along with the free camping pass for people with disabilities.

- \* Spring Meadow entrance fees were established, as follows: \$.50 per person, \$5.00 annual individual pass, and a \$10.00 annual family pass.

- \* The first plan for the Smith River was completed.

**1989:**

- \* For the first time, a state-wide entrance fee (\$2.00 per vehicle) and annual pass (\$12.00) were approved by the Fish and Game Commission. Previously, entrance fees had been established at a handful of parks across the state.

- \* The Golden Years Camping Pass Program for senior citizens was discontinued. Existing pass holders were offered a 50% discount on camping fees.

- \* Arnold Olsen succeeded Don Hyypa as Parks Director.

- \* Governor Stan Stephens endorsed a special committee appointed by the Director of FWP to



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

assess the status of the state park system, and make recommendations for the future (the State Parks Futures Committee).

- \* As a stop-gap measure to address a deteriorating park system, the Legislature appropriated \$2.6 million, in part to address critical maintenance needs.
- \* The Legislature passed the Smith River Management Act, giving the Department new recreation management authority for this river.

**1990:**

- \* The State Park Futures Committee Report to the Governor was completed. The report--which expressed serious concerns about the deteriorating condition of the park system--recommended spending an additional \$6.3 million annually on the park system over the next five years, and adding 30 new full-time employees. A 1990 report by the Montana Historic Sites Study Commission helped underscore some of the historical resource concerns noted in the Governor's Commission recommendations.
- \* A court ruled that golden years passes sold before the program was discontinued in 1989 were still valid. The court decision stated that golden years pass holders were exempt from all park user fees, including day use. The Department was ordered to refund fees collected from golden years pass holders.

**1991:**

- \* Day use and camping fees were increased by \$1.00. Annual day use pass prices were raised to \$15.00. A discounted "early bird" passport program was initiated (passports purchased before February 14 were made available for \$12.00).
- \* The name of the Fish and Game Commission was changed to the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission, to more accurately reflect its broader mandate.
- \* Selected recommendations from the Futures Committee Report were beginning to be implemented.
- \* Parks-related funding improved: LWCF funding rises to \$300,000 per biennium, while General Fund support for state parks was restored at a lower level of \$375,000 per year. The Division also set aside its Coal Tax deposits for two years to be used to help protect deteriorating historical resources.
- \* The Parks Division hired its first Trails Coordinator to help manage trail grant programs and provide other state-wide support for trails work.
- \* Montana's park rangers assumed peace officer authority, and began regular enforcement training.
- \* A documentary video of Lewis and Clark Caverns was produced; subsequently, videos on



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Makoshika and Bannack were also completed.

- \* In an effort to consolidate holdings and increase efficiency, the Division continued to turn selected sites over to federal or local managers, or work out joint management responsibilities. In one case, a park site (Elmo on Flathead Lake) on School Trust land leased from the Department of State Lands was lost to higher bidders.
- \* A Montana Conservation Corps Program was started.
- \* The Department approved Smith River float fees for private and outfitted parties, and required boat identification tags. Group size was limited to 15 people.

**1992:**

- \* The Parks Division produced a follow-up report detailing how it was implementing Parks Futures Committee recommendations. Among other activities, the Division was forming new partnerships with other agencies and groups, and continued to expand volunteer and intern programs.
- \* Legislative Special Session I cut state park general fund support by 8% due to a state budget shortfall. This reduction was followed by an additional 4% cut during a second special session.
- \* A \$3.50 fee on motor homes, supported by Good Sam charters, was being used to finance RV-related improvements in the state park system.
- \* The annual fee rule was changed to a biennial rule.
- \* Outfitted launches on the Smith River were allocated to outfitters with a history of prior use, and limited to no more than two outfitted launches per day.

**1993:**

- \* The Legislature passed the Primitive Parks Act, giving special designation to 14 parks which restricted development and allowed free access for residents.
- \* The Legislature allocated 6.5% of State Accommodations Tax revenues for state park maintenance.
- \* The Legislature allowed FWP to spend Coal Tax deposits for two more years to preserve historic and cultural sites.
- \* Day use fees at Greycliff Prairie Dog Town changed to \$.50 per person or \$3.00 per vehicle. Cabin rental fees at Lewis and Clark Caverns were set at \$25.00 to \$39.00 per night.
- \* Parks removed from the system during this period included Elmo, Holter Lake (to BLM), and sites along the federally designated Wild and Scenic stretch of the Missouri (to BLM).
- \* The Division completed an environmental impact statement for the snowmobile program.
- \* The FWP Commission adopted rules for the Smith River which, among other things, limited

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

the number of launches to 9 per day.

\* The first two FWP Comprehensive Weed Management Plans were completed (Region 2 and former Region 8). During the next several years, a weed management plan was completed for every region.

**1994:**

\* Following a lengthy negotiation over lease renewal, management of Canyon Ferry--the most heavily visited park in the system--was turned back to the federal Bureau of Reclamation, which was assisted by the Bureau of Land Management.

\* The Division began Montana's first state-wide, inter-agency Trails Plan. In conjunction with the Plan, a PEIS was started on two FWP trail grant programs (the OHV program and the National Recreational Trails Fund Act Program), similar to the one undertaken for the snowmobile program.

\* A new visitor center at Makoshika State Park opened.

\* Special events had grown in popularity to the extent that twenty-six parks were hosting them.

\* The volunteer program had expanded to the point where volunteers were performing work equivalent to 10 full-time employees, worth \$115,000 annually.

**1995:**

\* The Legislature approved funding to begin planning a new visitor center at Ulm Pishkun, and a new animal shelter and nature center at Spring Meadow Lake. The animal shelter was intended to replace the outdated facilities at Custer Avenue in Helena, and was being carried out through a joint partnership with the Mikal Kellner Foundation for Animals and the Forest Service.

\* The Parks Division assumed more management responsibility for the fishing access site (FAS) program; a new program coordinator was hired.

\* Reacting to agricultural concerns about noxious weeds, the Legislature passed a bill requiring new state weed management responsibilities. In addition to implementing compliance measures, each region worked toward completing comprehensive, inter-divisional weed management plans they had started before the legislation was passed..

\* The Department begins 2020 Vision, a plan for the Montana State Park System.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**1996:**

- \* A parcel of land at the base of the Ulm Pishkun buffalo jump was acquired through a land exchange to accommodate the planned visitor center.
- \* A updated plan was adopted for the Smith River which set indicators and standards by which use could be monitored.
- \* A new fee rule was approved by the FWP Commission which raised the price of group use, cave tours, and non-resident (non-outfitted) float fees on the Smith River.
- \* This was the first year of full MEPA implementation of the snowmobile PEIS.
- \* Draft management plans for Lewis and Clark Caverns and Chief Plenty Coups were finished. In addition, a final management plan for Wildhorse Island was also completed.

**1997:**

- \* New park fee increases for the 1998 season were approved by the FWP Commission.
- \* Work continued to move forward on the future Ulm Pishkun Visitor Center and the Spring Meadow Lake Nature Center.
- \* The Department completed an agency wide reorganization study, and continued to move toward a performance-based budgeting approach.
- \* Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator resigns; position filled with temporary appointments, while the agency began to discuss where the long-term home for the program should be.

**1998:**

- \* Comprehensive Blackfoot River Corridor Recreation Management Plan completed, in cooperation with other managing agencies.
- \* Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center opens in Giant Springs State Park. Center is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, in cooperation with FWP and other partners.
- \* Construction begins on the Ulm Pishkun Visitor Center.
- \* Number of Smith River launches reduced, after indicators measuring crowding in the 1996 Management Plan were exceeded.
- \* A Visitor Services Bureau Chief position was created in the Helena Office through reorganization.
- \* Montana State Trails Plan completed.
- \* 2020 Vision for Montana State Parks completed; work begins on Six Year Plan.



## **Review of Earlier Planning Efforts**

A number of significant planning efforts affecting both the Parks Division and the State Park System have been undertaken in recent years. To varying degrees, this work has provided part of the foundation upon which 2020 Vision has been built. Some of the most noteworthy planning work since the late 1980s is discussed below.

### **Montana State Parks System Plan (1989)**

Two consulting firms--Recreation Management Opportunities, Inc. (RMO) and Inside Outside--were retained to compile this first-ever system plan in 1989. RMO also completed a companion document titled the Montana State Park System: A Financial Review, which contains many of the same themes discussed in the system plan.

Although the consultants who produced the Plan visited parks and drew on Division staff for input and ideas, a major difference between 2020 Vision and the RMO effort was that the earlier system plan lacked a public involvement component.

The climate in which the RMO plan was produced was very different than the situation in the mid-1990s. The primary intent of the earlier plan was to address the deteriorating and almost desperate condition of the park system. Although a great deal has changed since this plan was completed, it still has elements of legitimacy, and is worth examining as a starting point for taking a fresh look at how the park system should be organized. A description of the situation existing when the plan was begun in 1988 was included in the introduction:

*Over the last five years, the Montana State Park System has experienced a slow but steady decline in its funding sources. It is now the only state park system in the nation without any general fund support. This lack of funding has resulted in deteriorating park resources, a reduction in staff capabilities, and a total diffusion of the park mission. At the same time this funding erosion was occurring, more areas were being added to the system, further diffusing operating capital. In the spring of 1988, the Montana State Parks Division began to take a planned, organized look at itself ...with an eye toward future recovery (RMO/Inside Outside 1989).*

The plan identified six major problems afflicting the state park system, as follows: 1) a lack of focus; 2) a serious funding problem; 3) a poor organizational structure; 4) inadequate staffing;



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

5) no operation, design, or maintenance standards, and: 6) too many units which have no reason for existence as state supported units.

In order to address these problems, the Plan recommended the following:

- 1) Develop an organizational structure with line authority over management of parks.
- 2) Develop a park-based management system.
- 3) Develop strong statewide standards for operation, maintenance, and design.
- 4) Institute a system of oversight of standards, compliance rewards, and penalties for individuals responsible for standards.
- 5) Develop strong constituencies for the goal of the park system.
- 6) Divest all parks in the system which do not fit the major goal or purpose of the organization.
- 7) Resist inclusion of parks in the system which do not fit the major goal or purpose of the organization.
- 8) Make planning a priority for all future actions of the system.

Two areas the plan placed particular emphasis on were systematically improving park management and maintenance. One of the primary criticisms the consultants made of park system management was that lines of authority between the central office and regions needed clarification; they felt the system was too regionalized, with insufficient central management authority. The authors observed that while state-wide standards existed, there was

*no system of compliance, review, and oversight...the concept of a regionally-based park system is viewed by the team as expensive, counter-productive and not in the best interest of the park and recreation resources of the state (RMO/Inside Outside 1989).*

The plan noted that because of a lack of consistent maintenance standards, maintenance was typically left to personal judgement, with no way to measure performance or determine whether funding was being used effectively. The result of this was widely varying levels of maintenance between parks, with no particular reason for the differences other than subjective judgement.

The authors further noted the difficulty in asking for more maintenance funding (or making arguments against cuts) unless a clear connection could be made between dollars expended and results. The plan recommended that priorities, standards, and work schedules be set for the four major maintenance areas (buildings, grounds, infrastructure, and equipment). One intended result of the plan recommendations was to make maintenance more consistent across units of the same classification in the system.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The 1989 System Plan developed a system for categorizing parks, building on an existing classification system already in use--natural, recreational, and historical/cultural. The Plan evaluated existing conditions in each park, discussed current uses, and--based on that analysis--organized parks according to four categories. A recommended future classification was also done for each park; the Plan then went on to recommend management systems and maintenance standards for each category of park, which would be consistent state-wide. The four classifications were as follows:

- I) Level One:** Parks in this category should be significant destinations. They should have high resource and/or recreation appeal, and should require on-site management. These parks should also have potential for future expansion and improvement. Parks identified for this category included Makoshika, Bannack, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Giant Springs, and the Flathead Lake system.
- II) Level Two:** These parks meet current system goals and, at a minimum, have regional appeal. They should be brought up to current standards and maintained at that level. Some of the parks in this classification might have potential for upgrading that would bring them up to a level one standards. Examples of some of the parks included in this category are Whitefish Lake, Lone Pine, Salmon and Placid Lakes, Missouri Headwaters, Black Sandy, Sluice Boxes, Madison Buffalo Jump, Pictograph Cave, Chief Plenty Coups, and Medicine Rocks.
- III) Level Three:** The Plan recommended that these parks be “mothballed” or closed until if and when future funding became available. These units were regarded as being sufficiently peripheral to the overall mission of the system so that they should not be draining resources from more fundamental units. The Plan further recommended that identification of these parks as state managed sites open to the public should be removed (e.g., highway signs).
- IV) Level Four:** The Plan recommended that these areas be removed from the park system unless funding was significantly improved. The criteria used to identify level four parks included the following: 1) the parks have only local appeal and use; 2) the expenses necessary to rehabilitate them are not justified; 3) use of the sites is not compatible with the larger park system goals (e.g., they are mainly used as rest stops, fishing access sites, etc.).

Based on these classifications, the Plan made specific recommendations for every park in the system. Many of these recommendations were acted upon, some are no longer appropriate, and others are worth taking a fresh look at. Of the recommendations that were implemented, perhaps the most significant were the substantial reduction in the size of the system, and the

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

improved maintenance in the remaining units. Some of the divested sites were turned over to federal agencies or local governments to manage, one was lost when leases on School Trust Land expired, while others have been reclassified.

Seven years after the first System Plan was completed, sites which are no longer designated state parks include the following: Elmo Unit, Flathead Lake; Holter Lake; Chief Joseph Battlefield; Wild and Scenic Missouri sites; Missouri Recreation Road; Nelson Reservoir; Les Mason; Big Pine; East Gallatin; Natural Bridge; and Deadman's Basin. It is worth noting that some of these sites were reclassified as affiliated lands or fishing access sites, and are still managed by the Parks Division. Portions of two river corridors--the Blackfoot and the Smith Rivers--are no longer designated state parks, but are managed as state park programs.

In addition to more specific recommendations, the 1989 State Parks System Plan also identified an overall goal for the system, as follows:

*Provide a quality visitor experience, consistent with resource preservation, in areas of recreational, natural or historical value serving a statewide, regional, or tourism market, with enough acreage to meet the area's objectives (RMO/InsideOutside).*

The themes mentioned here are consistent with the original, 1939 enabling legislation, although the latter never included any mention of the need to provide enough acreage to meet park objectives. This may reflect the relatively small size of many of the units in today's system, which places limits on the types of uses and activities which can occur.

Although the 1989 System Plan was never formally adopted, many of the issues which surfaced in the Plan remain valid today, and will be addressed later in 2020 Vision.

### **Montana State Parks System: A Financial Review (1989)**

The Financial Review was a companion document to the System Plan developed in 1989 by RMO. Among other things, the report identified a number of serious fiscal problems affecting the park system, including the following (RMO 1989):

\* **Insufficient Revenues:** Specific problems identified included senior citizen discounts, inadequate fee collection systems, overly inexpensive season passes, and lack of coherent identity for the system (visitors often don't realize they are in a state park and are therefore less willing to pay).



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* **Concessions Policy:** According to the report, most state parks at the time (the exception being Lewis and Clark Caverns) had such severe problems with maintenance, enforcement, and other areas of operations that private investors were not willing to take the risk of exploring potential concession opportunities.

\* **Appropriated Fund/Budget Constraints:** According to the report, a problem affecting the system was that limited parks funding was being “siphoned off” to fund other departmental programs. In spite of this loss, there were “self imposed” prohibitions on the use of license dollars for any park purposes. Additionally, the authors noted that “the total elimination of general fund appropriations reflects a lack of understanding of what the purpose of state parks is and what they can contribute to the economic health of the state” (RMO 1989).

The report also identified a number of issues related to the mission of the Parks Division, as a component of the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The authors observed that, while the Division seemed to have developed a comprehensive mission statement, “there is little reflection of this statement in the way parks are actually operated.” Furthermore, the analysts found that most parks were managed similarly, that there was “no real classification of parks as functional units within the system” (RMO 1989). Similarly, the report found that classification of Parks Division personnel was inadequate, and did not reflect job descriptions.

Specific areas of concern related to the mission of the Division and Department were also spelled out, as summarized below:

\* **Organization:** The report stated that “the most difficult problem facing the parks is the decentralization of the department into the seven regions,” resulting in a lack of coherent, state-wide focus. The authors further stated that “the structure of the organization is designed solely to administer hunting and fishing activities” (RMO 1989).

\* **Planning:** According to the report, “there is no evidence of a coordinated effort in the planning program. A lack of strategic planning has caused attacks on the system to go unchallenged” (RMO 1989). The authors emphasized the importance of sequentially planning from the general to the specific, through the following steps: state parks mission statement; state park system plan; park-specific management plans; and site-specific concept plans.

\* **Condition of the System:** As in the companion system plan report, the authors offered a very bleak assessment of the state park system as it existed in the late 1980s, as follows: “The condition of the facilities is indeed drastic. Parks are vandalized,



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

over-used, eroding, and poorly controlled. Facilities are in a sad state of disrepair and often poorly placed” (RMO 1989). Like the system plan, this report also mentions the need for acceptable operations, maintenance, and design standards.

**\* Morale/Perceptions:** The report’s observations about staff morale were equally sobering. The authors noted that a positive public view of the system was not possible until internal perceptions had improved: “No one is poor until they think they are and Montana State Park people are convinced they are poor” (RMO 1989).

**\* Staffing:** The RMO report stated that “staffing within the Helena office...cannot address any of the problems it is faced with...It also appears that existing staff assignments in Helena are consumed with Departmental or legislative requirements rather than address the problems at hand” (RMO 1989).

Overall, there is considerable overlap between the 1989 system plan and financial review reports produced by RMO. Although these documents were only completed seven years ago, the environment they emerged from was very different from the present. Nonetheless, each report has a number of recommendations and observations which remain relevant.

### **State Parks Future Committee Report (1990)**

In August, 1989, a State Park Futures Committee was appointed by FWP, with the approval of Governor Stan Stephens and legislative leaders. The Committee’s charge was to make recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, and Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission about the proper role, priorities, and funding for Montana State Parks.

The Committee met 11 times throughout the state in 1989 and 1990, visiting more than 20 state parks, conducting a state-wide newspaper survey, and hosting public meetings in 15 locations which were attended by more than 500 people.

#### **Overview of Findings**

The Futures Committee observed that since the mid-1970s, the park system had grown by 16 parks, while visitation doubled and real spending remained flat due to inflation. This trend was exacerbated in the mid-1980s when a stagnant economy, falling interest earnings, and other factors precipitated a budget crisis. Loss of general fund support, combined with a

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

capping of coal tax trust, resulted in a state park budget loss of nearly \$1 million per year. Additionally, LWCF funding was cut to approximately one twentieth its former amount.

The authors reiterated many of the concerns discussed in the RMO reports, including what they characterized as a dysfunctional organizational structure, and a system-wide deterioration of the park system caused by insufficient maintenance funding and a serious vandalism problem: "The system as a whole, is falling far short of its potential to educate, inspire, and inform park users of our heritage" (State Park Futures Committee 1990).

The Committee stated that the Division lacked a clearly articulated vision and list of long-term priorities. One result of this lack of direction was a vulnerability to being buffeted by political pressures, and a tendency to direct resources at issues which were not necessarily a high priority: "The system's history of growth appears to have been guided by opportunism and political pressure rather than by a systematic evaluation of the state's resources" (State Park Futures Committee 1990).

In the course of its research, the Committee found that Montana State Parks ranked at the bottom of the country's state park systems according to a number of criteria. At the time, Montana's system ranked 48th in the nation in spending per visitor: At \$0.49 per visitor, Montana was spending approximately one-third of what the National Park Service or North Dakota spent. According to the Committee, Montana was spending an average of \$25,000 annually per park, compared to North Dakota at \$66,000 and Colorado at \$145,000. Montana's state park staff was one of the smallest in the nation, with only 43 full-time and 140 seasonal employees, yet the system they managed was one of the largest in the country. In addition, Montana's park system ranked last in the country in the amount of revenue it was able to earn per visitor.

In presenting the final report to the Governor, Committee Chair Ed Zaidlicz wrote

*From public deliberations, we learned that Montanans have a passionate love affair with 'their' outdoor resources. But they are confused about much of the State Park System and are unhappy with its deteriorating conditions...Our Committee is alarmed at the rate of parks degradation involving a number of irreplaceable state treasures...Having publicly identified this situation--on our watch--history may prove unforgiving if we fail to make a creditable effort to redress the alarming trend (State Park Futures Committee 1990).*

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Recommendations**

In order to address the severe problems it observed, the State Park Futures Committee made a number of specific recommendations, as follows below:

**Funding and Staffing:**

\* Additional Funding: Acquire an additional \$6,313,000 per year for the system, through a primary mix of state general funds, coal tax receipts, and an equitable mix of user fees. The Committee also advised that the Division should work toward developing a philanthropic foundation for Montana State Parks.

\* More Staffing: Secure 30 more full-time staff members: “ The system does not include necessary specialists in history, historic structure preservation, archaeology, natural sciences, media, interpretation, and many others” (State Park Futures Committee 1990).

**Planning:**

\* System/Site Plans: Complete the draft State Park System Plan (i.e., RMO Plan discussed above), and develop site-specific management plans at sites which don’t have them. Involve the public in these efforts: “It is particularly important that the State Park System’s niche, or role be accepted and understood by the public. Without public involvement at this level, support is severely diminished” (State Park Futures Committee 1990).

\* Standards: Develop and implement system-wide quality standards for facilities and services.

\* Resource Inventory: Complete a comprehensive inventory of Montana’s natural, cultural, and recreational resources, beginning with state-owned properties.

\* Retain Parks: Postpone the disposal of any parks until sufficient planning, inventorying, and public involvement has been completed.

\* Education/Interpretation: The Committee found there was an “almost total absence in many parks of professional interpretive and educational effort, and the near absence of



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

outreach and interpretive programs for schools, the traveling public, and the tourism industry” (State Park Futures Committee 1990).

**Management:**

\* Integrate Parks into Rest of Agency: According to the Committee, FWP should strive to make the Parks Division a more integral partner with its fish and wildlife efforts: “The public believes that parks needs are too frequently subordinated to the needs of the rest of the department (State Park Futures Committee 1990).

\* Organizational Structure/Program Policy: The Committee observed that “the department’s organizational structure appears to have allowed too much individual autonomy among regional supervisors for park purposes...There is also a lack of parks program policy guidance at the Helena headquarters level to direct field effort on a statewide basis” (State Park Futures Committee 1990).

\* Cooperation: The Parks Division should improve collaboration with other agencies, organizations, and professionals.

\* Public Involvement: Staff should work to improve public involvement, and the Division’s accountability to the public.

**Image and Marketing:**

\* Professionalism: Montana State Parks should present a consistent image of the highest professional quality and standards for both park facilities and personnel. FWP needs to provide adequate professional development for State Park staff members (e.g., opportunities for training, conferences, etc.).

\* Marketing: The Governor should develop an aggressive marketing and promotion campaign for parks.

**Partnerships:**

\* State Government: Improve partnerships within the Governor’s administration (e.g., between tourism entities and parks).

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* Inter-governmental/Private: Enhance partnerships outside state government (e.g., federal and local government agencies, and the private sector). The Committee also recommended that the (then) dormant Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) program be reactivated.

**Committee's Long-term Vision for Park System**

The report completed by the Futures Committee contained a long-term vision for the state park system, which echos the major themes in both the original 1939 enabling legislation and the long-term goal stated in the draft 1989 System Plan. The Committee's vision statement was as follows:

*A State Park System which protects Montana's significant natural and cultural heritage, enhances peoples' well-being, provides high quality and accessible recreational opportunities for Montanans and visitors, and is appropriately managed to improve the economy through tourism (State Park Futures Committee 1990).*

According to the Committee, such a park system would be characterized by the following:

- 1) A legacy of natural, cultural, and recreational resources remaining undiminished and not degrading over time;
- 2) Natural and cultural resources being the best representative examples of statewide significance;
- 3) Recreational resources which are rural in setting and at least of regional significance;
- 4) Management policies which are guided by professionally and publicly developed long-range park management plans to assure proper stewardship in perpetuity;
- 5) Park land acquisition and disposal processes which assure that appropriate resources are added and inappropriate ones are removed on a long-term basis;
- 6) Management which adheres to uniform identity and quality standards of resource protection, facility construction and maintenance, and public service;
- 7) Public use facilities which are appropriate, safe, clean, and accessible;

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- 8) Educational, interpretive, and information services which adhere to uniform identity and quality standards;
- 9) Innovative and creative management techniques which make the best uses of outside assistance such as volunteers and cooperative relationships such as federal and local governments, the private sector, and with other interests;
- 10) Professional staff who provide Montana's leadership in park management and who develop working collaborations and technical assistance among other park providers;
- 11) A strong, positive image and organizational structure which is readily identifiable, accountable, and responsive to Montanans;
- 12) State Parks which are affordable to Montanans;
- 13) An essential element of the tourism industry network.

### **Status Report to the State Park Futures Committee (1992)**

In 1992, the Parks Division issued an update on how it had responded to the issues raised by the Futures Committee. The report documented significant progress on many of the problems identified in the earlier report. Operating costs, for example, were reduced by transferring eight sites or sets of sites to other managing agencies, while revenue generating potential was enhanced. Many of the initiatives started or enhanced between 1990 and 1992 gradually became important, institutionalized components of the State Parks Division. An extensive volunteer and intern program, an expanded menu of special events, improved maintenance, and a closer working relationship with the state tourism agency--to name a few--are some of the initiatives which grew out of this period.

In spite of the successes, however, the report noted that critical challenges remained, most notably securing adequate funding. According to the report, the "1991 session brought us only half of what we said we needed to keep from slipping backwards, and we continue to slip" (FWP 1992). In subsequent sessions, State Parks has been able to secure additional funding to address some of the needs chronicled by the Futures Committee, but there is not adequate long-term funding stability.

A number of other issues detailed in the Futures Committee report remain relevant. There continues to be uncertainty about lines of decision-making authority between the regions and Helena. Most state parks still do not have current management plans, and many never had a



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

management plan of any type completed. While certain FTE deficiencies have been addressed (e.g., more staff time devoted to education and interpretation, for example), staffing remains tight. Enforcement and vandalism in state parks remain problems.

Finally, there remains confusion about what constitutes a state park. A number of sites are of local or regional significance, at best. There is not a clear functional differentiation, for example, between state parks and certain fishing access sites. More generally, because of the large amount of federal land in Montana, the identity of the state park system and rationale for being is not as coherent in the public's mind as in many other states. The Future's Committee felt that the niche of the State Park System in the wider array of Montana's natural, cultural, and recreational resources was inadequately defined and--while this is probably less true today than it was in 1990--it remains an issue.

### **Montana's Parks: Present and Future (1997)**

In May, 1997, the Montana Parks Association (MPA) Board assigned a volunteer staff member (Program Director, Mike Penfold) to review and evaluate the Montana State Park system, and report back with findings and recommendations. At the Association's November, 1997 Board meeting, the recommendations in the report were adopted by the Association.

MPA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and improvement of the Montana State Park system. The Association is completely separate from FWP and the Parks Division, and its report on the park system was done independently of 2020 Vision and other Department planning efforts.

As part of his research for the report, Penfold visited 38 of Montana's 41 state parks. Overall, he reported being impressed with the level of maintenance he saw, and the professionalism of the staff he dealt with. He found state park staff to be "extremely busy," so much so that he found them reluctant to take on new initiatives or work assignments: "The risk from the Park staff point of view is that to take on new assignments will result in being less able to do current assignments" (Penfold 1997).

One of the major themes in the report is--that while the Association believes the Division is currently doing a good job with the resources it has available--there are significant opportunities for doing more:

*...the Montana State Parks System does not reach its potential and is a minor player in strengthening the recreation and tourism industry. The Parks Division can play a much stronger role if given a chance...In a state with the giants of Yellowstone, Glacier, and*

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

*other federal lands, the great future opportunities lie in private and state action. The Parks Division can be and should be a greater leader in carving a quality future for the State of Montana (Penfold 1997).*

The report made recommendations in a number of different areas, as summarized below:

**Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission**

The report states that a disproportionate amount of the Commission's time is absorbed with fish and wildlife matters, leaving insufficient opportunity to address parks issues. According to Penfold, a "sharper focus" on parks issues by both the Commission and the Governor's Office would discourage "the tendency of the Legislature to micro-manage the Division" (1997).

The report mentions a number of alternatives to strengthen the focus on parks, including the following:

- \* Make certain that some of the appointed FWP Commission members have a principal interest in history and park management.
- \* Appoint a sub-committee of FWP Commission members to make recommendations to the full body on parks and history issues.
- \* Work to pass legislation creating a separate history and parks commission, and/or put Montana State Parks under the Virginia and Nevada City Commission.
- \* Move state parks into the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

After listing these alternatives, the Association's recommendation was to leave state parks within FWP, and work to make park and history issues a more integral component of the FWP Commission's charge. There were no detailed recommendations about how to accomplish this, but Penfold suggested discussing the matter with the Governor and Commission members.

The report also discussed an independent commission established by the 1997 Legislature to oversee management of Virginia and Nevada Cities. The legislation which established the Commission also authorized it to manage other historical properties in addition to Virginia and Nevada Cities, although to date this has not occurred. MPA concludes that, while the "emphasis is good," there is a risk of creating "separate competing organizations on parallel

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

tracks...The state will be better off with one strong agency managing historic properties, rather than two weak competing agencies” (Penfold 1997).

### **State School Trust Lands**

According to the report, State School Trust Lands “can contribute more fully to the citizens of the State and the tourism business and still meet their legal mandate of raising revenue for the schools (1997). There have been instances in the past (e.g., the Elmo unit of Flathead Lake State Park) where land leased by the parks division was lost to public use because a higher bidder was awarded use of the property. The crux of the conflict is that other public values are generally subservient to the mandate of generating revenue for the school system.

The Association’s recommendation was to work toward increasing the flexibility with which School Trust Lands are managed by initiating discussions with the Governor and other members of the State Land Board.

### **Law Enforcement and Vandalism**

MPA believes that law enforcement and the prevention of vandalism need to be strengthened in Montana State Parks. The report mentions a number of issues which the Parks Division has been attempting to address in recent years, including working with the Enforcement Division to more fully incorporate parks work into warden duties; utilizing campground hosts as a means for reducing vandalism and other enforcement problems; and trying to establish a Ranger Reserve Program, which failed to pass in the 1997 Legislative session.

The MPA report recommends supporting existing options which are currently working in some areas, such as seasonally assigning wardens to park issues. Additionally, the report recommends having a volunteer or paid host in every significant campground. Finally, the report states that MPA will support the Ranger Reserve bill, if it is reintroduced to the Legislature.

### **Paper Work**

The MPA report claims state park staff are being inundated in paper work that does little to improve the quality of the park system: “It is important to have public involvement on critical matters but now we have overkill that is costly and non-productive” (Penfold 1997).



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

According to the report, much of the paperwork is generated to satisfy the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The report recommends that the Division develop categorical exclusions for certain routine projects in order to reduce the number of environmental assessments required.

**Acquisition Funds, Encroachment, and Access**

Visitor experience quality is eroding in some parks due to adjacent development. There is a lack of funding to secure protection for these adjacent lands, or purchase new land for the state park system. Part of the problem is that virtually no federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) money has been allocated to state and local projects during the past few years. The report recommends that MPA lobby for allocating half of all LWCF funds to the state side of the program, for use in state parks and other state and local recreation projects.

**Roads**

According to the report, “road construction and rehabilitation is the major infrastructure expenditure needed for the parks, and funds for this from the Legislature are becoming more tenuous” (Penfold 1997). The report recommends that MPA work to prevent the diversion of any additional parks road money to other needs.

**Parks and Interpretive Planning**

Montana State Parks “face many complex land use and social issues that require a strengthened capability in planning” (Penfold 1997). The report notes that a significant amount of planning is being done, but staff limitations severely restrict what can be accomplished.

The report recommends that MPA work to help the Division strengthen its planning capabilities, and mentions a number of possible alternatives, include building a larger planning staff (with at least one recreation/land use planner and one interpretive planner in Helena); contracting some work to private firms; developing in-house teams to be temporarily assigned to a park (e.g., to help with a management plan); and requesting friends groups to help lead planning efforts.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Staffing/FTE**

According to the report, politically-controlled restrictions on staffing is hurting the park system, and leading to inefficiencies. The report recommends that MPA work with the Legislature and Governor's Office to remove "artificial barriers" such as FTE limitations that "constrain good management" (Penfold 1997). The report further states that MPA supports a decentralized approach to managing the park system, giving staff closest to issues the authority to make decisions.

**The Legislature**

The report is critical of the role in the Montana Legislature has played in respect to the park system, claiming that it has tried to

*micro-manage the state parks with the result of wasted time and often poor park policy...At the same time, the Legislature has shown little vision of the opportunities that the parks offer for Montana citizens and the tourist industry and the administrative tools needed to operate a top Parks Division (Penfold 1997).*

In order to help improve this situation, the report recommends that MPA work to cultivate relationships with Legislators in both parties, particularly those in key committees. The report suggests that MPA "develop the capability to have a lobbying presence in Helena at critical times" (1997).

**Education in Parks**

MPA underscores the importance of utilizing Montana State Parks as educational vehicles. The report acknowledges that many productive educational opportunities have been developed in Montana State Parks, but says there are more opportunities to build stronger ties between parks and schools: "The principal constraint is not lack of program ideas nor attitude of the park staff but FTE and funds" (Penfold 1997).

The report suggests that MPA become an advocate for the educational value of parks, particularly when issues of staffing and funding are being discussed by the Governor and Legislature. In addition, MPA would like to focus more attention on the productive educational work that is already occurring in the park system.

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Inter-Divisional Relationships**

The MPA report states that the Parks Division “administers programs that require better cooperation with and between all divisions within FWP” (Penfold 1997). Part of the problem is funding categories, some of which are inflexible; in some cases, there may be authorized funding for work which is a low priority for the agency, while higher priority tasks lack sufficient funding. The need to allow funding to flow across divisional boundaries can sometimes cause tension between divisions.

According to Penfold, there is little MPA can do to address this issue, aside from being an advocate for improving inter-divisional communication and cooperation.

**Watchable Wildlife in the Parks**

The report notes the importance of wildlife viewing in Montana as a whole and state parks in particular, and observes there are opportunities for improving and expanding this experience (e.g., introducing bighorn sheep to Lewis and Clark Caverns and possibly Makoshika).

MPA recommends that the currently vacant Watchable Wildlife Coordinator position be filled, and that the “full expertise of the Department should be brought to bear on increasing wildlife viewing opportunities in the parks” (1997). Additionally, the report recommends that MPA cooperate with both FWP and other wildlife-oriented organizations to enhance viewing opportunities, and work at both the national and local level to improve funding for watchable wildlife programs.

**Destination Parks in Northeastern Montana**

The report notes that state parks and other public lands are concentrated in western and southern Montana. With the exception of Hell Creek State Park on Fort Peck Reservoir, northeastern Montana has no state parks.

According to MPA, “we need an effort in the state to work with communities and people in the northern tier to explore candidate State Park areas, and a strategy in the state to establish parks in the region” (1997). Some of the types of sites mentioned in the report include a “sodbuster” homestead, a Lewis and Clark campsite, a wetland complex, and/or a prairie park with antelope and buffalo.



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Penfold proposes that MPA work with the Governor and his administration to get support for exploring state park opportunities in this part of the state.

### **Funding**

MPA acknowledges that the initiatives discussed in the report will require new funding sources. Some of the mechanisms discussed include the following:

- \* **Rental Car Surcharge:** This tax--which is found in many other states--would be paid primarily by out-of-state visitors. According to the State Budget Director, a 6 percent fee would raise about one million dollars per year.

- \* **Temporary Rise in the Bed Tax:** According to MPA, increasing the bed tax from 4 to 5 percent would generate approximately \$2.6 million per year. Again, this is a tax which primarily affects out-of-state visitors.

- \* **User Pay Principle:** MPA acknowledges the trend toward requiring users of recreational resources to pay for using various types of facilities. Fee options mentioned in the report include entrance and commercial use fees at Wildhorse Island; private concessions at Tongue River Reservoir; and expanding camping fee charges to more than 100 fishing access sites.

### **Montana's Parks, Rivers, Historical Sites, and Trails: A Vision for the Future**

MPA proposed two major future initiatives for Montana State Parks involving river corridors and historic trails. The intent of both initiatives would not be to purchase or actively manage all the land along the corridors, but rather coordinate management between the various entities with a stake in the resources.

In respect to the rivers initiative, the report proposed convening a conference as an initial step toward establishing a "Rivers of Lewis and Clark" corridor concept. This idea is intended to be a cooperative private-public partnership to more effectively conserve, manage, interpret, and promote the Montana rivers Lewis and Clark traveled on. The report recommends that MPA discuss the idea with the Governor, with the long-term goal of having Montana State Parks designated as the leader of the initiative.

The second component of MPA's proposal would be to establish an historic trails program managed by Montana State Parks, in cooperation with the Montana Historical Society and

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

other partners. Several key trails in Montana are managed by the Federal Government (e.g., the Nez Pierce Trail, the Continental Divide Trail, the Lewis and Clark Trail), while other routes of key historical significance (e.g., Bozeman Trail) lack a managing entity. As an initial step, Penfold recommends that MPA play an active role with the Frontier Heritage Alliance in planning a major symposium on the Bozeman Trail for 1999.

**Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks**  
**Vision Statement**

In late 1997 and early 1998, FWP administrators met to craft a new agency vision statement, which was intended to provide broad direction for the agency as it enters the twenty first century. The components of this Plan, as well as other plans and activities throughout the agency, are intended to be congruent with and flow from the framework established in the vision statement. The vision statement (currently in draft form) is as follows:

*As we enter the Third Millennium, we will celebrate Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' 100th anniversary. This occasion is reason for us to pause and reflect on where we have been as well as imagine the future we want to create.*

*In Montana, as around the world, many changes are occurring which will result in significant challenges in the years ahead. To put today's issues in perspective, consider for a moment the challenges faced 100 years ago. Market and subsistence hunting and fishing had nearly eliminated once common species of fish and wildlife. There was no Fish, Wildlife & Parks agency. Nor were there any funds dedicated to wildlife conservation.*

*The people of Montana took a bold step in creating an agency and imposing hunting and fishing license fees on themselves to support wildlife conservation. They had hope and they took action. Rebuilding fish and wildlife populations was a partnership among landowners, hunters and anglers that spanned more than half a century. This vision would be broadened to include preservation of heritage resources, starting in 1936 with the establishment of Lewis and Clark Caverns as our first state park.*

*As we begin FWP's second century, we have an opportunity to revitalize that vision, rekindle partnerships and build on one of the most successful conservation stories in the world.*

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Vision for the 21st Century**

*Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will create a foundation on the land and a commitment in the hearts and minds of people to ensure that, in our second century, and in partnership with others, we will sustain the fish, wildlife and parks resources and the recreational opportunities that are essential to a high quality of life for Montanans and our guests.*

**Guiding Principles**

*We understand that achieving the vision is both a privilege and a responsibility to serve the people of Montana. We also understand that we cannot achieve our vision alone. The following principles will guide FWP as we begin our second century:*

- \* We will maintain the long term viability of Montana's natural, cultural and recreational resources.*
- \* We will actively involve people in decisions that affect them; help people to participate by providing them with credible and objective information; and, develop programs with a clear understanding of public expectations for Department service.*
- \* We will serve as an advocate for responsible management and for equitable allocation of public use of the limited resources which we are entrusted to manage.*
- \* We will manage fish and wildlife resources with pride in Montana's hunting and angling heritage.*
- \* We will create and strengthen working partnerships with individuals, organized groups and other natural, historic and cultural resource management agencies.*
- \* We will use innovation and technology to improve our services.*

***Goal A: Create a work environment where priorities are clear; the decision making process is efficient and effective; and, where employees feel a sense of accountability, value and satisfaction in their achievements and their contributions to the agency mission.***

- 1) FWP will effectively and efficiently utilize our human and financial resources, while fulfilling our role in natural and cultural resource issues.*
- 2) FWP will complete strategic and six year plans for fish, wildlife and parks programs*



*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

*to clarify public expectations, allocate resources and define a common direction for FWP and our partners.*

*3) FWP will foster personal and professional growth of employees by developing and using meaningful employee agreements and performance standards.*

*4) FWP will create and maintain a professional, diverse and responsive workforce by improving employee recruitment, selection and career development.*

***Goal B: Provide quality opportunities for public appreciation and enjoyment of fish, wildlife and parks resources.***

*1) FWP management decisions will equitably balance the interests of hunters, anglers, outdoor recreationists, visitors to historic sites, landowners, general public and the needs of Montana's fish, wildlife and parks resources.*

*2) FWP will manage its wildlife program to balance game damage, human/wildlife conflicts and landowner/recreationist conflicts with the perpetuation and protection of wildlife populations.*

*3) FWP management decisions recognize that Montana's agricultural community is integral to the management of Montana's fish and wildlife populations and the habitats that support them.*

*4) FWP will provide diverse and equitable opportunities for people to experience a variety of outdoor recreation, historic and cultural experiences on public and private lands.*

*5) FWP will provide quality services for people who use Montana State Parks.*

*6) FWP will fairly and equitably enforce all regulations and maintain public safety at FWP sites.*

***Goal C: Maintain and enhance the health of Montana's natural environment and the vitality of our fish, wildlife, cultural and historic resources through the 21st Century.***

*1) FWP programs will be consistent with ecologically sound and sustainable practices and managed within funding capabilities.*

*2) FWP will advocate for programs to conserve and enhance high quality aquatic habitat and protect native aquatic species.*

*Chapter III: Mission and History of the Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

*3) FWP will advocate programs to conserve and enhance Montana's terrestrial ecosystems and the diversity of species inhabiting them.*

*4) FWP will advocate the long-term protection and enhancement of Montana's cultural, historic, pre-historic and natural resources.*

*Goal D: Emphasize education, communication and responsible behavior to afford citizens the opportunity to better understand and participate in the decision making processes that sustain our natural, recreational and cultural resources for future generations.*

*1) FWP will help Montana citizens to understand and participate in FWP's decision-making process.*

*2) FWP will provide regulations, program information and educational materials that are accurate, reliable and easy for people to use and understand.*

*3) FWP will help people to be aware of and appreciate Montana's fish, wildlife, cultural, historic and natural resources.*

*4) FWP will provide family oriented educational opportunities to help all ages learn to participate in and enjoy Montana's many and varied outdoor recreation opportunities.*

*5) FWP will encourage high standards of outdoor behavior by outdoor recreationists who participate in FWP regulated activities.*





## IV

# THE PARKS DIVISION: ORGANIZATION, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES

The Parks Division--in cooperation with other components of FWP--offers a diverse range of programs and activities which help support its mission within the agency. In addition, the Division has a complex array of funding sources and positions, as described later in this section.

FWP is an executive branch state agency, the director of which is appointed by the Governor. Within FWP, Parks is one of the three major divisions in the agency. In FY 1998, the Parks Division budget was the third largest in the agency at 13% of the total (see figure IV-1). The other divisions--which support the work of the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Divisions--include the following: Conservation Education; Enforcement; Field Services; and Management and Finance.

**FIGURE IV-1**  
**FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS BUDGET (FY 98)**



Overseeing the direction of the agency is a five-member Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission, which is appointed by the Governor. The Commission is charged with setting agency policy,

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

approving fee and licensing changes, establishing regulations, authorizing all land transactions, and reviewing the Department's budget prior to submission to the Legislature.

## **Parks Division Organization**

### **Employees and Organizational Structure of the Parks Division**

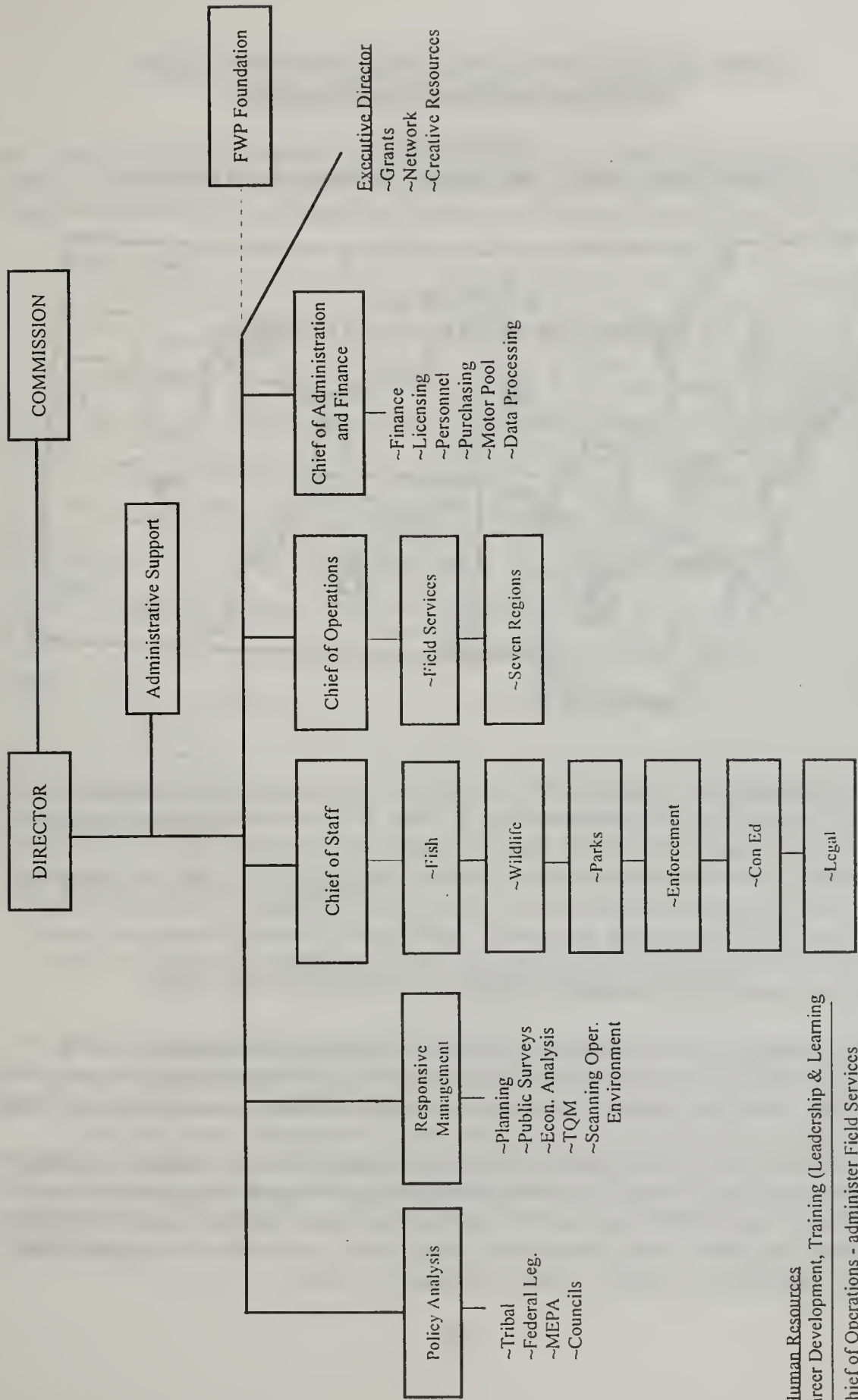
The Parks Division is responsible for the development, maintenance, and operations of all state parks, affiliated lands, and fishing access sites (FAS). The Division is also responsible for helping plan, fund, and manage diverse recreational opportunities (e.g., through the Trails Program, Watchable Wildlife Program, etc.), while preserving important natural and cultural resources, and contributing to the state's economic development. All of the programs managed by the Parks Division depend significantly on support from staff in other FWP divisions.

The Parks Division Administrator in Helena has authority over division budgets and FTE. Each regional office has a regional supervisor, who coordinates the activities of parks staff and the other divisions within the region. Staff in each region report to their respective regional supervisor, who is in turn supervised by the Chief of Field Operations in the Helena Office. The Field Operations Chief has the responsibility of mediating when there are disagreements between regional supervisors and division administrators. The Chief of Staff position--which was reestablished in early 1998--coordinates activities between the Divisions in Helena (see figure IV-2).

The Parks Division is represented in all the regions except Region 6 (Glasgow), where there are currently no state parks (see figure IV-3). The Division also has a staff presence in the Helena Area Office, a sub-unit of Region 3; staff at this office are responsible for managing Helena-area FAS sites and Spring Meadow Lake, Black Sandy, and Elkhorn State Parks. There are other regional sub-offices in Havre and Butte, but no Parks Division staff are present at these locations.

At the time the State Park Futures Committee Report was released in November, 1990, the Parks Division had one of the smallest staffs of any state park system in the country. While the number of employees has grown since then (partly in response to recommendations in the report), the Division's staff remains one of the smallest in the nation, and is geographically dispersed over a large area (NASPD 1997). Parks staff have the responsibility for managing and maintaining more than 360 separate and diverse sites, including state parks, FAS units, and affiliated lands.

**FIGURE IV-2**  
**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS ORGANIZATION CHART**



~Human Resources  
 Career Development, Training (Leadership & Learning)  
 ~Chief of Operations - administer Field Services  
 ~Potential to reorganize (relocate) Land Unit/Team  
 ~Need plan for natural resource information systems - GIS, etc.



**FIGURE IV-3**  
**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS REGIONS**



At the beginning of fiscal year (FY) 1997, the Division had a total of 210 employees, 167 of which were seasonal and 43 permanent, making a total of 97 full-time equivalent employees (see table IV-1). Early in FY 97, 12 of the permanent employees Parks Division employees were working in the Helena Headquarters Office (by the middle of FY 1998, the Helena staff was down to 8 permanent employees, with two additional vacancies, one of which is likely to move to another Division within the agency). Staff support is bolstered during the summer months by volunteers and interns; without their service, the Division would not be able to provide the level of service currently available.

Park staff in each region with parks are supervised by a regional parks manager, who is assisted by a regional parks operations specialist (POS) and a maintenance supervisor (see figure IV-4). State park managers are located at a number of parks, including Bannack, Chief Plenty Coups, Cooney Reservoir, Flathead Lake (based in Kalispell), Lewis and Clark Caverns, Lone Pine, and Makoshika. Several park programs also have managers, including the Smith River, Blackfoot River corridor, and State Capitol Grounds Maintenance. The Helena Area Resource office also has POS, who oversees Spring Meadow Lake, Black Sandy, and Elkhorn State Parks. Most parks in the system have no permanent staff assigned on-site, although a number have volunteer caretakers during the summer.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The Parks Division Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Program Development Bureau Chief, Visitor Services Bureau Chief, various program coordinators (e.g., Trails Program, Watchable Wildlife, etc.), and other staff work in the Helena Office (see figure IV-5).

**TABLE IV-1**  
**PARKS DIVISION: FY 97 FTE TOTALS**

	<b>FTE</b>
Base	86.32
LCA	.24
Statutory	7.89
Proprietary	2.72
Capital	0
<b>TOTAL FTE</b>	<b>97.17</b>
# Seasonal Employees	167
# Permanent Employees	43
<b>TOTAL # EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>210</b>

(Note: Terms are defined in appendix E.)

**Parks Division Budget, Funding Sources, and Fees**

In FY 1997, total budgeted expenditures were approximately \$8.4 million (\$3.0 million in capital expenses, and \$5.4 million in operations). In FY 1990, by contrast, the Parks Division budget was \$3.4 million, including \$2.3 million in operations, and \$1.1 million in capital.

When the FY 97 Parks Division budget is broken out by program, the largest are the various categories making up the state parks program, totaling \$3,042,298, or 55.0 percent of the Division's budget. The FY 97 FAS program budget totaled nearly \$900,000, or 15.6 percent of the budget.

FIGURE IV-4

PARKS DIVISION REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

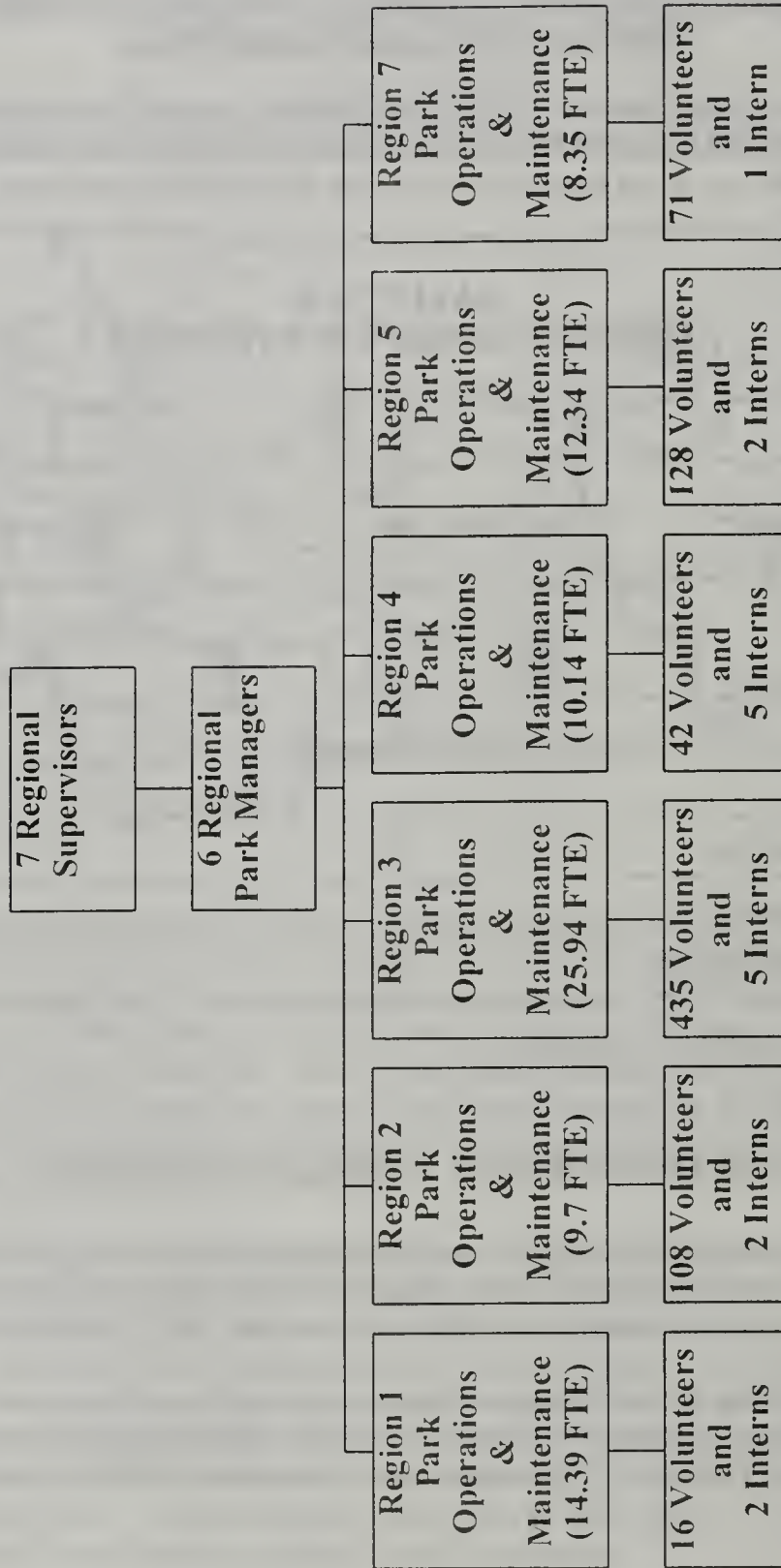
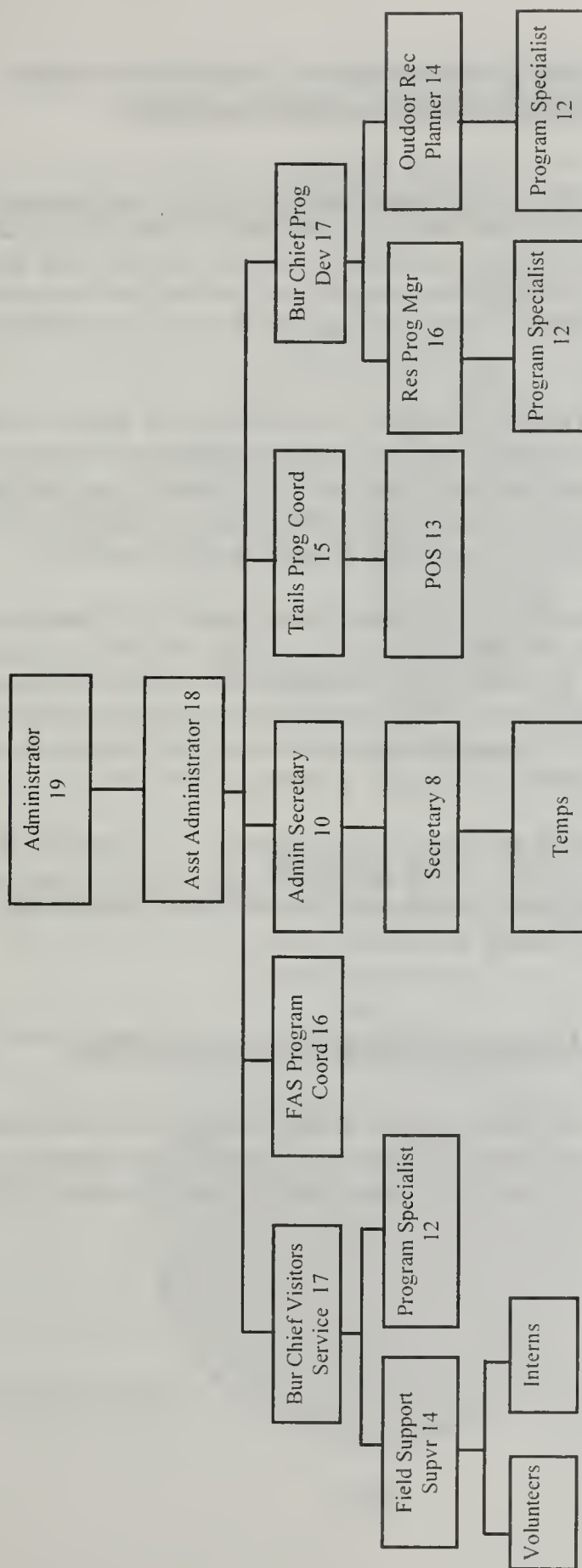




FIGURE IV-5

MONTANA STATE PARKS:  
HELENA OFFICE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (1998)



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

At approximately \$600,000, the snowmobile program had the third largest budget in the Division. Like the OHV Program, the snowmobile program is legislatively mandated, and is funded through a mix of fuel tax money and decal registration receipts. When the various elements of the Trails Program budget are combined, they total 16.7 percent of the budget. Other components include Capitol Grounds, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and Watchable Wildlife.

In FY 97, the Parks Division relied on more than twenty-three major funding sources; the largest single source was the motorboat fuel tax account, contributing more than \$1.1 million, nearly 37 percent of the budget (see figures IV-6 and IV-7). General fund contributions to the overall budget, on the other hand were only \$295,000, less than 10 percent of the total. (A description of all Parks Division funding sources is included in the appendix E.)

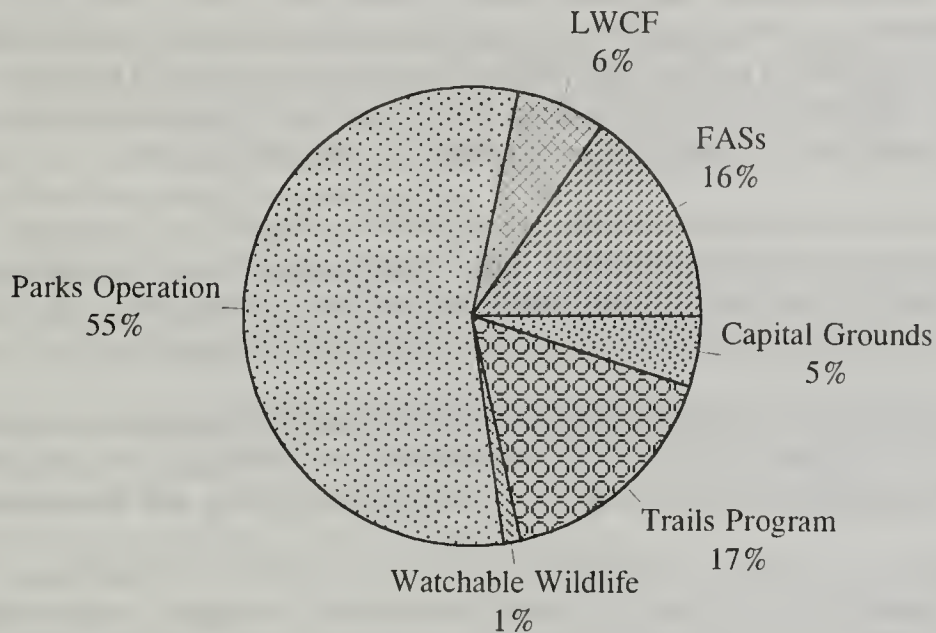
In FY 1997, earned revenue from a variety of sources accounted for 20.8 percent of total operation expenses. Montana residents are required to pay day use fees at 22 state parks; non-residents are required to pay fees at 25 parks (see appendix F for 1998-99 fee schedule). A state parks passport is sold which allows both residents and non-residents entrance to any park in the system. Camping fees are required of both residents and non residents at 16 state parks, as well as some of the FAS units (no day use fee is required at FAS sites).

Other fee revenue is generated through tours and cabin rentals (e.g., Lewis and Clark Caverns), group use fees. Smith River floater and outfitter fees, group use rates, and miscellaneous charges for things like special events, firewood sales, boat slip fees, and special permits issued for commercial filming and other activities.

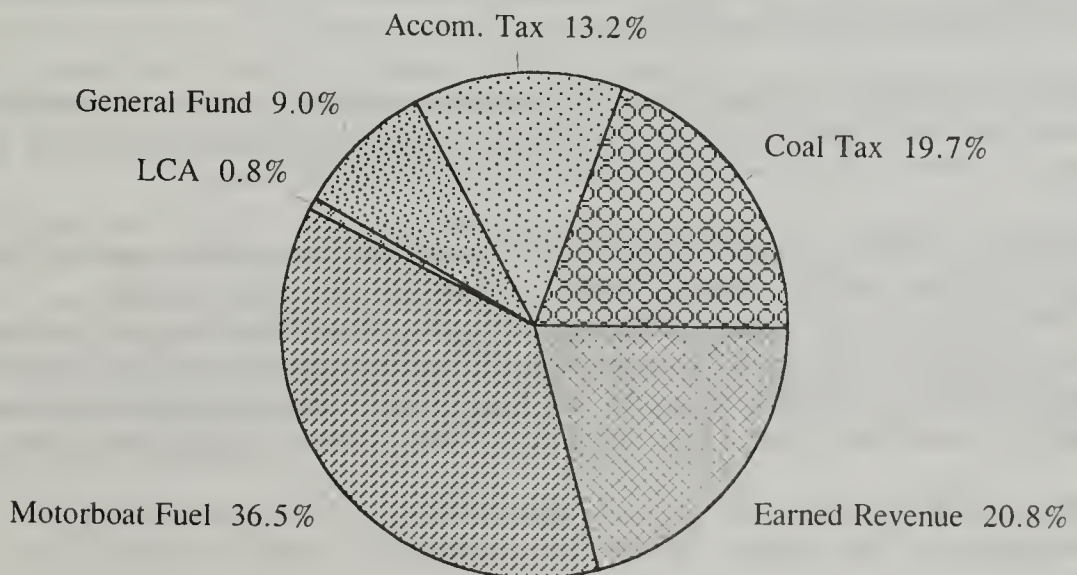
### **Parks Division Programs and Activities**

The programs and activities which are part of the Parks Division are discussed below. Some of these relate mainly to the state park system itself, while others have connections to the system but are much broader in scope (e.g., state-wide Trails and Watchable Wildlife Programs).

**FIGURE IV-6**  
**PARKS DIVISION OPERATIONS BUDGET, BY PROGRAM (FY97)**



**FIGURE IV-7**  
**PARKS PROGRAM OPERATIONS, BY FUNDING SOURCE (FY97)**





*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

## **Park Operations and Maintenance**

Operations and maintenance encompass day-to-day park functions and routine care of facilities, as summarized here and in more detail in some of the sections which follow. Budget allocation priorities for park operations and maintenance are established by the Division based on biennial appropriations approved by the legislature. Allocation of funds takes into consideration individual park visitation, types of resources and the significance of the site, major maintenance needs, operating system complexity, and related factors.

Park operations and maintenance activities are supervised by regional park managers who set regional priorities for expenditure of funds, improvements, and program development. Park operations supervisors and park operation specialists run the day-to-day functions of each park and assist the manager in the planning, development, and improvement of park sites.

Park Operation Supervisors and Specialists are typically responsible for the operation of one large, heavily visited park, or a number of smaller park sites. Staffing at parks may include caretakers, fee compliance officers, seasonal rangers, volunteer hosts, and maintenance staff.

Park operations and maintenance includes visitor services and public information, enforcement of rules and regulations, fee collection, budget and personnel management, preparation of management plans and environmental documents, maintenance work, and other duties.

Visitor services include providing information to visitors in the form of personal contacts, brochures and signs, developing and presenting educational and interpretative programs, organizing special events, and making products or services available via concessions (e.g., food, firewood, marina operations, etc.).

Interpretive, educational, and special event programs are coordinated by the park operation supervisor or specialist, and are made available to both park visitors and the surrounding community. In recent years the frequency of these programs has increased.

Park rules and regulations are enforced both by FWP game wardens and park rangers. Each region has at least one certified ranger. Rangers have completed the Montana Law Enforcement Academy; they have full arrest powers for only those infractions involving state park statutes. The typical duties of a park ranger are to provide information to park visitors, encourage compliance with rules and regulations, and provide for the safety of park visitors. All rangers in the state park system have duties beyond that of their ranger responsibilities.

Fee collection is accomplished both by on-site staff and by the “honor system” using fee collection stations or “iron rangers.” Visitors are required to have either a valid state park

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

passport or a daily entrance receipt in their vehicle to use fee parks. Staff check vehicles for compliance and makes every attempt to contact a visitor personally prior to assessing a surcharge or issuing a ticket for non-payment of the park fee.

While final Division-wide decisions about budgets and FTE are made in Helena, park and region-specific budget and personnel decisions related to park operations are made in the regions. In most cases, management plans and environmental documents are done in the regions, either by on-site park personnel or in the regional headquarters, with Helena Headquarters staff performing a review function.

Maintenance of Montana State Parks is performed primarily by FWP staff under direction from the Regional Maintenance Supervisor, although some specific tasks are contracted to the private sector. The Maintenance Supervisor, in cooperation with the Regional Park Manager, sets the priorities for cyclical maintenance and major maintenance projects. The Maintenance Supervisor directs work crews consisting of a lead maintenance worker, laborers, and caretakers. Typically, caretakers are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of a cluster of parks and FAS sites in a specific geographic area. A traveling crew performs heavier, more specialized maintenance tasks and major maintenance projects.

Only Bannack, Giant Springs, Lewis and Clark Caverns, and Makoshika have (at least seasonal) on-site maintenance crews, with those crews also taking care of some other small sites nearby. Each regional headquarters has a fully equipped maintenance shop. Park maintenance shops are also located at Bannack and Lewis and Clark Caverns.

Maintenance crew time is split between state parks and fishing access sites (FAS); funding and FTE for these two separate functions are split out between license dollars and state parks funding sources. No license dollars are spent on the maintenance of state parks. However, since 1997 Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds (e.g., Wallop-Breaux Act) have been used for the operation and maintenance of both state parks and FAS units.

Certain maintenance functions are contracted out to the private sector such as toilet pumping, road grading, dust abatement, and most weed control work. Contracting these functions is done to avoid large investments in equipment and--in the case of weed control--to avoid having to store chemicals and reduce the risk of accidents related to applying and transporting chemicals. Because of the small size of the state park staff, the private sector may also be contracted to provide expertise in particular areas, or to otherwise complete a job for which no qualified staff are available.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

## **Parks Capital Program**

The current capital development program has been dedicated toward maintaining and improving existing park facilities, with an occasional project to add new educational facilities. Park capital projects include such major maintenance as road repair, graveling, culvert replacement, boat ramp repair, improvement of water and sewer services, historic building stabilization, the provision of latrines and showers for park visitors, and making facilities accessible for people with disabilities.

Potential park capital development projects originate with either public demand, identified resource protection needs, or regularly scheduled replacements. Potential projects are submitted by the regional parks managers, regional supervisors, or other Divisional staff; prioritized between regions by the Divisional Office; approved by the Directors Office; and submitted to the Legislature for authorization. The capital program is coordinated by the Parks Division Assistant Administrator, a grade 18 position located in the Helena Office.

Capital projects are selected by the Division using a priority system based on the following criteria: 1) public health and safety; 2) protection of natural and cultural resources; 3) historic site stabilization; 4) rehabilitation and site protection; 5) visitor services, interpretation, and education; and 6) the need for compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

The capital improvement program typically has about 10 different funding sources available, each of which has a specific earmarking or dedicated use. Capital improvements at sites dedicated to water-based recreation (and which allow motor boating) are supported by the following: fees paid in-lieu of taxes on motorboats; motorboat fuel tax receipts; motorboat licensing decal fees; fishing license dollars; and Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (e.g., Wallop-Breaux) and motor boat enhancement funds. Cultural and historic site projects are supported by the state parks portion of the coal tax, parks user fees, and the FWP land trust account. The accommodations tax supports capital projects which are dedicated to park maintenance. The state parks road repair and improvement program is supported by highway fuel tax revenues.

Typical cultural park capital projects which have been accomplished in the recent past include stabilization of historic buildings at Bannack, Elkhorn, Granite, Fort Owen, Parker Homestead, Wildhorse Island, and Chief Plenty Coups State Parks. Road improvement projects--completed in cooperation with local county governments--have been done at Cooney, Bannack, Flathead Lake, Black Sandy, Lake Mary Ronan State Parks, and along the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor. Other road projects were completed recently at Makoshika, Missouri Headwaters, and Tongue Reservoir State Parks. Boating improvements such as



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

ramps, docks, and restrooms have been made at Black Sandy, Flathead Lake, Cooney, Tongue Reservoir, and Salmon and Placid State Parks. One of the largest capital projects in recent years was a new visitor center constructed at Makoshika State Park, which opened in 1994.

### **Parks Division Planning**

Planning within the Parks Division includes both centralized and decentralized components. Park-specific plans (e.g., management plans, interpretive plans, etc.) are typically done by regional staff, with oversight, review, and funding provided by the Helena Office. State-wide parks and recreation planning (e.g., 2020 Vision) is generally done in the Helena Office, where a (grade 14) outdoor recreation planner position is located. Plans, or portions of them, are also sometimes contracted out to consultants.

While most Parks Division planning relates directly to the State Park and FAS systems, the Division also has state-wide recreation planning responsibilities. One example of this is the Division's Trails Program: Three major trail-related planning efforts have been initiated in recent years, including a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on the snowmobile grant programs, a PEIS on the other two FWP trail grant programs, and a state-wide trails plan.

In the past, much of the centralized recreational planning in the Helena Office focused on fulfilling federal state-wide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP) requirements. In order to remain eligible to receive federal LWCF dollars, states have been required to complete a SCORP at least once every five years. The focus of SCORP is identifying the outdoor recreational needs of Montanans, and suggesting programs and actions to satisfy them. Montana completed SCORP Plans in 1965, 1969, 1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, and 1993.

As discussed earlier, the amount of LWCF funding has diminished dramatically in recent years, and the status of SCORP planning and the LWCF program as a whole is in question. In the future, it is more likely that state-wide recreation planning efforts will be driven increasingly by identified state-specific needs rather than general federal SCORP requirements.

Both the Helena and regional offices go through a similar budget cycle planning process, including the development of workplans, mid-year variances, and end-of-year reports. Like the rest of the agency, the Parks Division is in the process of moving toward an outcomes, performance-based budget planning system. Six year plans will become the vehicle to bridge the gap between the long-range recommendations in this plan with annual work plans.



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Presently, there is no Department-wide planning bureau to provide support for the FWP Divisions, although the Responsive Management Unit fills some of this function, particularly in respect to public involvement and surveys.

**State Park Management Plans**

Park planning can be thought of as a hierarchy, running from the general to the more specific. General management plans are the most complete and comprehensive, establishing the overall direction for the provision of visitor services, the management of natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and the development of all associated facilities and programs. The management plan should be a working, dynamic document that ultimately guides the day-to-day operations of a park, as well as serving as the basis for long-range management actions.

While some parks are operating under a recent management plan (e.g., Wildhorse Island, Smith River), most parks in the system either need a management plan completed or an older one updated. Completion of park management plans--followed by more specific site development plans--is one of the most significant planning needs in the Division. Progress is directly related to the availability of staff to concentrate on these efforts.

To date, there has not been a systematic attempt to address comprehensive management planning needs for Montana State Parks, in part because of a shortage of staffing and lack of a prioritized list of planning needs. When a decision is made to undertake a management plan, it is often sparked by an initial interest in undertaking a major capital project or management change; doing a management plan provides a means for assessing how the proposed changes would affect and fit into the larger context of the park.

A key benefit of a good park management plan is that it provides a guide for decision-making and blueprint for continuity, as staff members inevitably change and institutional memory is lost. Typically, management plans have a lifespan of five to ten years, although ideally they have the capability of being updated and amended on an on-going basis. Public involvement is an important part of every management planning process.

Park management plans generally include the following types of information:

- \* Overview of the planning process and rationale for doing the management plan.
- \* Inventory and analysis of the park's natural, recreational, and cultural resources, as well as infrastructure. Land issues such as park boundaries and buffer zones should also be included.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* Description of relevant legislation, policies, history, park classification, and other sideboards.
- \* Analysis of budget, staffing, park operations, and visitor services.
- \* Discussion of significant trends affecting park visitation, outdoor recreation, and tourism.
- \* Review of visitor satisfaction, desires, park survey results, etc.
- \* Summary of the state-wide, regional, and local context (e.g., supply of similar facilities in the area, local economic base, etc.).
- \* Identification of threats, opportunities, and major issues.
- \* Establish long-term park goals, objectives, strategies, and policies dealing with all significant aspects of the park, including operations, management, maintenance, land issues, capital projects, visitor services, etc. The plan should assess a range of alternative courses of action, including possible management zones. Information on the costs of the recommendations should also be included.
- \* Maps of relevant spatial aspects of the park are an important management plan component.
- \* Define a process for implementing recommendations and monitoring results.

### **Other Types of Park Plans**

Other, more specific types of park-related plans are listed and described below. These may be done following completion of a management plan to provide more detail in key areas, or they may be done in the absence of a current management plan. These types of plans often have a number of different names--as well as various combinations and permutations--but they generally fall into something resembling the following categories:

#### **Site Concept Plan/Draft Master Site Plan**

This type of plan--along with the final site development plan discussed below--is typically initiated by a potential major capital project (or projects). A range of conceptual alternatives are the focus, including--for example--various configurations for a new campground, day use area, or visitor center configuration. The plan helps both managers and the public inventory resources, define and evaluate possibilities, and establish general project goals. This stage in the planning process is typically preceded by a "scoping" phase, with the intent of capturing the full range of relevant issues affecting the project.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Master Site Plan/Site Development Plan/Preliminary Design**

These are more detailed planning exercises which would generally follow the concept plan/draft master site plan, with more specific information on the selected alternative, including costs. This stage is a kind of bridge between exploring the preliminary concepts and arriving at a final design. In most cases, draft and master site plan information needs to be displayed visually in map or plan view format to be effective.

**Project Plans/Final Design**

Project plans are even more detailed, and would typically include the specifications and engineering drawings required to actually begin construction. Depending on the nature and scope of the project, an EA is generally done, either in conjunction with the appropriate planning document or separately.

**Resource-Specific Plan/Management Guide**

The focus of this type of plan could be either natural, cultural, or recreational resources. The intent is to inventory selected park resources (e.g., historic buildings at Bannack, park flora and fauna, or recreation resources), assess their condition, and make recommendations about how they might be best conserved and managed. In some cases, the resource coverage in a general management plan will be followed by a more detailed treatment of selected resources.

**Maintenance/Operations/Visitor Services Plans**

Again, these are more specific plans which might be appropriate when there is not a compelling need to take the more comprehensive approach of a full-scale management plan. Conversely, these topic-specific plans may follow a general management plan, when more detail is required. Education, interpretation and/or concessions issues are examples of what a visitor services plan might focus on.

**Status of Parks Division Plans**

As of 1997, the status of state park management plans and other parks and recreation-related planning efforts recently completed, in progress, or proposed are listed below. The Weed



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Management Plans include not only state park lands, but FAS units and wildlife management areas.

**Region 1**

- \* Wildhorse Island Management Plan/EA (1995)
- \* Lone Pine Management Plan (Planned)
- \* Flathead Lake Management Plan (Planned)
- \* Flathead Lake Water Trails Management Plan (Planned)
- \* Comprehensive Weed Management Plan/EA (1995)
- \* Harry Horn Site Plan/EA (1996)
- \* Lone Pine Interpretive Plan (In progress)
- \* Big Arm/Wildhorse Island Interpretive Plan (1997)

**Region 2**

- \* Frenchtown Pond Management Plan (In progress)
- \* Blackfoot River Corridor Recreation Management Plan (In progress--completion in 1998)
- \* Comprehensive Weed Management Plan/EA (1993)
- \* Fort Owen Master Interpretive Plan (1982)
- \* Fort Owen Architectural Conservation Assessment (1992)
- \* Granite Architectural Conservation Assessment (1992)
- \* Alberton Gorge Management Plan (Planned)

**Region 3**

- \* Bannack Management Plan (In progress)
- \* Bannack Phase II Development Plan/EA (1995)
- \* Bannack Building Condition Assessment (Draft completed in 1994)
- \* Bannack Interpretive Plan and Conceptual Design (1995)
- \* Bannack Master Site Plan (1995)
- \* Bannack Curriculum Guide (1997)
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns Management Plan/EA (In progress--completion in 1998)
- \* Lewis and Clark Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (1995)
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns Cave Management Plan (In progress)
- \* Lewis and Clark Curriculum Guide (1994)
- \* Spring Meadow Lake Management Plan (Planned)

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* Spring Meadow Lake Nature Center Preliminary Concepts/EA (1995)
- \* Spring Meadow Lake Environmental Education Portfolio (Grade 5 and Older--1997)
- \* Missouri Headwaters Curriculum Guide (1993)
- \* Missouri Headwaters Maintenance Management Guide (1992)
- \* Missouri Headwaters Interpretive Talk Manual (1996)
- \* Comprehensive Weed Management Plan/EA (1994)

**Region 4**

- \* Smith River Management Plan (1996)
- \* Giant Springs Master Site Plan (In progress)
- \* Giant Springs/Rivers' Edge Trail Interpretive Plan (1997)
- \* Ulm Pishkun: Planning for New Visitor Center and Interpretation (Complete in 1998)
- \* Comprehensive Weed Management Plan/EA (1996)

**Region 5**

- \* Chief Plenty Coups Management Plan/EA (1995)
- \* Lake Elmo Management Plan (1985)
- \* Comprehensive Weed Management Plan/EA (1994)

**Region 7**

- \* Rosebud Battlefield Management Plan (In progress)
- \* Tongue River Management Plan (In progress)
- \* Makoshika Management Plan (In progress)
- \* Makoshika Interpretation Plan (In progress)
- \* Hell Creek Master Site Plan (1993)
- \* Comprehensive Weed Management Plan/EA (1996)

**Statewide/Helena**

- \* State Trails Plan/Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Complete in 1998)
- \* 2020 Vision for Montana State Parks: State Park System Plan (Complete in 1998)
- \* Parks Division Outcomes and Performance Measures (Complete in 1998)
- \* Fishing Access Site System Study Process (Complete in 1998)

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* Montana State Parks: Six Year Plan (Complete in 1998)
- \* Fish and Wildlife Diversity Initiative Plan (1997)
- \* Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (On-going inter-agency planning effort)
- \* Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan (Inter-agency effort coordinated by Montana Power Company--1997)

One goal of this plan is to improve Montana State Parks management planning. The Six Year Plan for Montana State Parks (which will follow 2020 Vision) will utilize the list above to help identify priority parks for management plan completion during the next six year period.

### **State Trails Program**

The Trails Program is responsible for managing three state-wide trail grant programs, providing technical support to trails projects throughout the state, functioning as a central contact for various trail clubs and interested parties, organizing state trails conferences, providing staff support to the State Trails Advisory Committee (STAC), and other trail-related duties.

The Parks Division has had a State Trails Coordinator position since 1991. As of FY 1997, the position is a grade 15, and was supported by small fractions of additional FTE support in each region, .25 FTE of statewide support (based in Region 3), and .20 FTE of support staff in the Helena Office. In FY 1997, the Trails Program was nearly 17% of the total Parks Division budget.

One of the main responsibilities of the State Trails Coordinator is managing state grant programs for snowmobiles and off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and the federally-funded National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA). Details about the programs are as follows:

- \* OHV Grant Program: The purpose of the OHV Grant Program is the development, renovation, and improvement of off-highway vehicle trails and riding areas. The program--which was initiated in 1992--is funded by a percentage of the state gas tax (1/8th of 1%), based on an estimate of the fuel used by OHV riders. Ten percent of this funding source is allocated to the Conservation Education Division to promote off-highway vehicle safety. In addition to gas tax money, the program is also funded by proceeds from OHV registration decals, with 40% of this money allocated for OHV enforcement purposes. In FY 1997, 18 OHV trail projects were funded, for a total of \$136,600.



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* Snowmobile Grant Program: This program provides grants to local snowmobile clubs, chambers of commerce, and government agencies to groom trails, in addition to the following: development of new trails; maintenance and upgrade of existing trails; plowing of access roads and parking lots; inventorying, installing, maintaining, and removing signs and trail counters; and maintaining Department grooming equipment. Similar to the OHV program, funding is provided through an estimate of state fuel taxes generated by snowmobile use (5/10ths of 1 percent), in addition to proceeds from the \$5 registration decal fee. A registration decal fee was first initiated by the Legislature in 1973; use of a portion of the gas tax for funding snowmobile trails was authorized in 1977. In FY 1997, 28 grants were awarded through the Snowmobile Program, totaling \$325,300.

\* NRTFA Grant Program: NRTFA (also known as the Symms Act, after the original Congressional sponsor) is a federally-funded grant program in existence since 1991. The money is made available to FWP through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), based on an estimate of federal gas taxes paid by off-highway recreational vehicle users. Since the Act was passed, \$7.5 million was made available nationwide in FY 1993, and another \$15 million in both FY 1996 and 1997. The Program was designed to fund a variety of trail uses, with 30% going to motorized trails, 30% to non-motorized uses, and the remaining 40% for diversified use. The funds may be used for trail development, renovation, maintenance, acquisition, safety, and interpretation. In FY 1997, 27 projects were funded, for a total of \$178,680.

In 1993, a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) was completed for the snowmobile grant program, in order to assure compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). In addition, FWP staff are working on a similar PEIS which will cover the OHV and NRTFA Programs.

In cooperation with the other trail managing agencies in the state, the user groups represented on the STAC, and other trail interests throughout the state, the Division is in the final stages of completing a Comprehensive Montana State Trails Plan. The Plan is intended to provide long-term direction for the inter-agency, state-wide trail system. As part of the preliminary research for the Plan, the Division contracted with the University of Montana to compile an inventory of the state's trails, and to conduct a random survey of adult Montanans about attitudes toward trails and trail uses.

From a larger perspective, the Trails Program has matured enough to become a Department-wide program, not just a Parks Program. Future efforts will have more involvement with other divisions and programs, as the goal is to have an environmentally sensitive trails effort. At the time this plan is being written, discussions regarding the future of the trails program are

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

proceeding. Options such as privatization, turning the program over to federal land managers, or expanding existing efforts are all being discussed.

### **Watchable Wildlife Program**

In 1990, FWP began a Watchable Wildlife Program in order to broaden its non-game wildlife information efforts. The Program serves a growing public interest in wildlife viewing. Nationwide, for example, participation in birdwatching increased 155% between 1982 and 1994, one of the largest increases of any outdoor recreational activity (USFS, 1997). According to a survey conducted in 1993, 83% of adult Montanans participated in some type of wildlife viewing during that summer, either on a trip or at home (ITRR, 1995).

The Watchable Wildlife Program shares some similar history and areas of interest with the Non-game Program managed by the FWP Wildlife Division, but the focus of each is different. The Watchable Wildlife Program, for example, deals with all species of wildlife, while the Non-game Program addresses only those species which are not hunted or trapped. While the Watchable Wildlife Program focuses on education, recreation, and conservation information, the Non-game Program's emphasis is on monitoring and inventorying species. At one time, these functions were combined in the same position, but are now separate.



FWP developed a registered logo entitled "Montana's Watchable Wildlife" in 1990, which was used to identify project brochures, and other components of the new program. Another key element in forging an identity for Watchable Wildlife came out of the joint effort to produce the first edition of the Montana Wildlife Viewing Guide in 1990, which was subsequently updated in 1995. Montana's program is connected to larger inter-agency and nation-wide efforts; the binocular logo has become a symbol for wildlife viewing areas and materials throughout the country (pictured to the left). Within the state, coordination between government agencies and other organizations occurs through a Watchable Wildlife Working Group.

FWP's Watchable Wildlife Program was transferred (at least temporarily) to the Parks Division from Conservation Education in 1994. The Program has been coordinated by one grade 15 FTE, occasionally with the assistance of interns. In the past, the Watchable Wildlife Coordinator provided support to both Fisheries (.3 FTE) and Wildlife (.3 FTE), in addition to the Parks Division (.4 FTE). However, the Watchable Wildlife position is currently vacant

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

(as of March, 1998), and discussions are underway within FWP to determine which division this position should be located in permanently.

Some of the major focus areas of the Watchable Wildlife Program include the following:

- \* Researching, writing, publishing, and distributing materials on wildlife viewing, behavior, identification, habitat, viewing sites, and other related topics.
- \* Cooperating with other agencies in identifying wildlife viewing sites, and developing signs and interpretive materials for them. Throughout the state, more than 100 roadside sites are identified by signs with a binocular logo on them. Many of these wildlife viewing sites are also identified on the state highway map.
- \* Coordinating publication of regular materials on wildlife and wildlife viewing for the media.
- \* Cooperating with Falcon Press and other parties in reprinting the Montana Wildlife Viewing Guide.
- \* Developing wildlife curriculum guides for schools.
- \* Giving talks on wildlife-related topics.
- \* Work with resource managers to develop wildlife interpretive plans and materials for state parks, fishing access sites, wildlife management areas, fish hatcheries and other sites.
- \* Working with members of the tourism industry and other interests to promote wildlife viewing, and educating people about its economic value.
- \* Participating in the annual International Wildlife Film Festival.
- \* Developing information for backyard habitats and school projects.
- \* Periodically surveying the public on wildlife viewing-related matters.

A significant portion of the Watchable Wildlife Program is funded through the "Wildlife Checkoff" donation option on the Montana tax form. Total proceeds in recent years have ranged between twenty and thirty thousand dollars; if collections fall below twenty thousand for two consecutive years, the checkoff option will no longer be eligible for inclusion on the form. (Strategies to address this require legislation and include allowing matching dollars to make up the minimum amount, or allowing more time to combat falling receipts before removal from the tax forms.)

In FY 1997 budgeted funding included \$26,000 in license dollars, \$21,500 from the checkoff, and \$17,200 from parks sources. The budgeted amount for personal services and operations were \$35,200 and \$29,500, respectively, for a total program budget of \$64,700.



## **Fishing Access Site (FAS) Program**

Montana's Fishing Access Site (FAS) program provides an important part of the outdoor recreational opportunities available in the state. Initiated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the program's purpose is to provide public access for fishing and boating opportunities on lakes, rivers, and streams across Montana. The FAS logo (a fish and fishhook) is used on signs along roadways to mark the locations of sites (see below).



In 1996, the Parks Division assumed management of the sites from the FWP Fisheries Division; previously, the Parks Division had only been responsible for site maintenance. The Parks and Fisheries Divisions still cooperate closely on the Program, with Fisheries being largely responsible for identifying and acquiring new sites. A grade 16 employee in the Helena Parks Division office coordinates the FAS program.

The number of FASs in the program has grown steadily, increasing from approximately 110 sites in 1970 to more than 300 currently. Acquisition of new units has been funded from the fishing license dollar account, as well as federal LWCF and Wallop-Breaux money. The majority of FAS sites purchased have been under 10 acres in size, but some range up to several hundred acres.

On an on-going basis, FWP will look at adding strategically-located new FAS sites to the system. The funding available in the acquisition account for the purchase of new FAS sites is currently slightly more than \$1,000,000.

For a parcel to be selected as a potential FAS, the site must be in an area where public water access does not exist, or additional access is needed due to public use patterns. In order to be considered, a site must be owned by a landowner willing to sell or lease the land.

The level of development for public use varies from site-to-site. Many of the FASs are developed to a level that includes latrines, parking areas, and improved access roads to the site. Other FASs are undeveloped, remaining in the same state they were when purchased. Generally, the FASs are developed to the minimal level necessary to make them usable to the public, while protecting them from resource degradation. The wide range in the levels of site development ensures a diversity of recreational opportunities.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Maintenance of the FASs is provided by Parks Division staff in each of the FWP regions. Maintenance activities performed by Parks staff include litter pick up, weed control, fencing, vandalism repair, and other duties. With increasing public use of the FASs, the demands for maintenance have increased (staff time spent dealing with the concerns of neighboring landowners has also increased, as more developments have cropped up adjacent to some sites.). Department costs for the operation and maintenance of the FAS program are over \$600,000 per year. Funds from fishing license sales and federal Wallop-Breaux money are major components of the FAS operations and maintenance budget.

A FWP Study Team was formed in 1995 to examine the program and recommend improvements. Some of the potential improvements and changes to the FAS program (as of 1997) include development of the following:

- \* The establishment of an FAS acquisition policy.
- \* A statewide registration and fee structure for commercial use of FASs.
- \* A registration/fee system for commercial whitewater users of the Albion Gorge west of Missoula is in the process of being implemented (in addition to a state-wide inventory of all commercial users of FWP sites).
- \* A classification system which organizes sites according to whether they are “primitive” or “developed.” An ARM rule for primitive FASs is currently being drafted.
- \* An updated data base of all the sites within the program.
- \* Start-up operation and maintenance costs for new FASs are being funded by the Fisheries Division.

In addition to the above, the FWP Commission approved (beginning in the 1998 season) an expanded number of FAS units where camping fees will be charged. The new fees are expected to increase revenues, but also make on-site fee compliance and collection duties more challenging. These initiatives and others are part of an on-going and evolving process intended to better meet changing public needs for recreational water access.

### **Interpretation and Education**

Interpretive and educational programming has been part of Montana State Parks for a long time, but in recent years it has played an increasingly important role, becoming an integral recreational component of what state parks offer. The Montana State Park system continues to evolve beyond simple interpretive signs and brochures to special events, interpretive centers, living history presentations, and other opportunities.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

One example of how these programs have evolved are the tours at Lewis and Clark Caverns, which are the oldest educational program in the park system. At one time tour guides provided very general (and sometimes fanciful) information on formations and how the caves were discovered.

Today people taking the tour expect more sophisticated presentations, which have become more factual and scientific. The cave tours are supported by a redesigned visitor center, which includes a full-scale reproduction of part of the cave, along with interpretive information. A visitor center at Makoshika State Park which opened in 1994 established a new benchmark for interpretation in the system, including a range of displays covering the geology and archeology of park resources.

Aside from explanatory tours and visitor centers, other components related to the Division's education and interpretation efforts include the following:

- \* **LEARNING TRUNKS:** One tool which has grown in importance in recent years are educational "learning trunks," which have been assembled for Lewis and Clark Caverns, Bannack, Makoshika, Ulm Pishkun, and Giant Springs, as well as other specific topics connected to the resources addressed by FWP. These trunks and corresponding curriculum guides are provided to teachers for use in classes.

- \* **CURRICULUM GUIDES:** Curriculum guides have been completed for Lewis and Clark Caverns and Missouri Headwaters; two more are in progress for Bannack and Makoshika. Curriculum guides have also been developed through the Watchable Wildlife Program for eagle viewing and study below Canyon Ferry Dam, and for the Gates of the Mountains area at Holter Lake. These projects have been done in partnership with other agencies and private groups to enhance the educational value of student trips to these sites.

- \* **INTERPRETIVE INFORMATION:** Some of the most widely used education and interpretation tools include signs, displays, brochures, and booklets. Grants from the non-profit Montana State Parks and Wildlife Interpretive Association are available to help fund some of these efforts.

- \* **WATCHABLE WILDLIFE:** The Watchable Wildlife Program (discussed separately in this chapter) was moved into the Parks Division from the Conservation Education Division in 1995. The emphasis of this program is to educate the public on opportunities for wildlife viewing, habitat needs, and ethical viewing practices.



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* **EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS:** In recent years, a series of professionally-produced educational videos have been completed for Makoshika, Lewis and Clark Caverns, and Bannack State Parks.

\* **INTERPRETIVE PLANS:** Interpretive plans have been completed for Bannack, Fort Owen, and Lewis and Clark Caverns, and are in the process of being developed for Spring Meadow Lake, Ulm Pishkun, and Lone Pine.

\* **CAMPFIRE TALKS:** A number of parks offer periodic educational “campfire talks” in the summer, featuring a wide range of experts, from archaeologists, to historians, to wildlife biologists.

\* **SPECIAL EVENTS:** Special events often have an education or interpretive component, such as the reenactment of the Lewis and Clark encampment at Giant Springs and other living history demonstrations. A change in the 1998-99 fee rule authorized charging fees at selected special events and tours. (See next section for more information.)

\* **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:** The Parks Division works cooperatively with staff in the FWP Conservation Education Unit to present educational programs. Staff from Conservation Education sometimes give presentations at state parks, and work with the State Trails Coordinator on various programs related to trail safety.

\* **INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS:** In recent years student interns and volunteers have been used to deliver or coordinate programs. A good example was the weekly series of “Discovery Day” programs at Spring Meadow Lake in 1995. These were coordinated by a student intern, and were intended to entertain young children, as well as introduce them to various parts of the park’s natural environment through nature walks, demonstrations, and other methods.

\* **INTERNET INFORMATION:** Parks Program staff routinely update information on Montana State Parks included as part of FWP’s website (<http://FWP.MT.GOV>). In addition to this general information, Region 5 Park staff are working cooperatively with the Western Heritage Center, and Billings area schools to establish an electronic educational tour of Chief Plenty Coups and Pictograph Cave State Parks on the Internet.

Even with the increased emphasis on interpretation and education noted above, the programs offered by Montana State Parks are still less extensive than those in many other park systems in the country. The Division has only recently begun to establish regular and structured

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

educational and interpretive programs. Much of this work is done under the direction of the park operation specialist in each region, as one part of many other duties. The Division has not yet developed its interpretive and educational programs using a core theme, mission statement, or set of program objectives; working on these is a goal for the immediate future. Toward that end, the Division hired its first full-time interpretive specialist in early 1998, the (grade 17) Parks Visitor Services Bureau Chief position in the Helena Office.

### **Special Events and Services**

As recently as 1991, there were only a handful of “special events” and special services available at some of the state parks. In recent years, there has been growing interest on the part of educators in using parks as “outdoor classrooms,” while other visitors are interested in new outdoor experiences. As a result, the Division has responded with a growing number of special events and services, particularly during the first half of the 1990s. By the 1996 season, there were over 60 special happenings taking place throughout the park system.

Special events in parks afford citizens the opportunity to better understand and appreciate the natural and cultural resources in state parks, in a setting designed to be educational and fun, often with a special focus on families. The participatory, “hands-on” nature of many of the events provides a good vehicle for establishing a rapport between park staff and visitors. Support for state parks is enhanced when people take an active part in park activities, which fosters a sense of “ownership” in the care and maintenance of the place they had an enjoyable, memorable experience. Most of the special events in the parks are sponsored by “friends” groups or civic organizations, and are heavily staffed by volunteers, making them an excellent way of getting local residents involved in the park system.

The growing number of special park activities are previewed annually in a “Calendar of Events” publication (see appendix G). Activities are not limited to just the warm summer months; at a number of locations around the state, events are scheduled in the off-season.

The scheduled activities are extremely diverse, as indicated by the following examples: Bannack Days (a recreation of the gold boom frontier); the Lewis & Clark Encampment (living interpretation of the famous explorers’ portage around Great Falls, near Giant Springs); KiteFest (a kite competition at Frenchtown Pond); Buzzard Day (welcoming the turkey vultures and spring back to Makoshika); Chief Plenty Coups Day (a special day devoted to Crow Indian culture); Holiday Candlelight Tours (touring the Lewis and Clark Caverns like it was done in the early days); the Garden City Triathlon at French Town Pond; Dinner Theater in the Park (outdoor dinner followed by a play, in Makoshika); and ice skating on the old Bannack dredge pond (free ice skates, hot drinks, and a warm fire).

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

## **Boating Program**

The Boating Program operated by the Parks Division is a user-pay system dedicated to improving and maintaining boating access and related facilities at State Parks. The Parks Division operates 12 State Parks (out of a total of 41) which are, at least in part, operated for motor boating. Some of the most important state parks for motor boating include Flathead Lake, Cooney Reservoir, Tongue River Reservoir, Salmon Lake, and Placid Lake.

The boating program provides and maintains facilities such as boat ramps, latrines, courtesy boat loading docks, boat mooring docks, marine sewage pumpout stations, roads and parking. Additionally, the program operates and maintains day use and camping facilities which are used by boaters.

Motorboat-related funding comprises approximately 1/3 of both the capital and operations budgets for Montana State Parks. Motorboats account for an estimated 9/10 of 1% of all of the gasoline used in Montana; the motorboat program receives the same percentage of gasoline tax receipts, which comprises the single largest funding source for the program. In addition to the above, the boating program receives 20% of all of the fees paid in lieu of taxes on motorboats. Finally, the program receives Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (Wallop-Breaux) motorboat access funds, which are raised via an excise tax on motorboat fuels and fishing equipment. At least 25 percent of the cost of a Federal Aid project needs to be paid with state matching funds.

FWP receives advice on boating-related matters from the State Boating Advisory Committee, which provides input on issues such as the expenditure of capital improvement funds, operation of boating sites, and boating education, safety, and enforcement needs. The State Boating Advisory Committee is appointed by the FWP Director. The Program is coordinated in the Helena Parks Office through the Assistant Administrator.

## **The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program**

The Federal LWCF program was created by an Act of Congress in 1965, and includes funding components for both federal agencies and states. The state portion of the program provides grants-in-aid to state and local governments, school districts, and Indian tribes to assist in acquiring, developing, and improving outdoor recreation opportunities. The main share of LWCF is derived from revenues produced by Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas leasing. Available federal dollars must be matched by 50% state or local funds.



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The LWCF Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to states for outdoor recreation purposes; this authority has been delegated to the National Park Service. To be eligible for assistance under the LWCF Act, the governor of each state must designate an official to represent the program (i.e., the State Liaison Officer). In order to retain edibility for funding, states have been required to identify priority recreation needs through a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) once every five years.

The FWP Parks Division is responsible for administrating the LWCF Program in Montana. The Parks Division receives all applications for funding assistance, evaluates the applications using an established ranking system, awards grants to successful applicants, monitors the program for compliance, and is responsible for coordinating the SCORP.

In Montana, more than 750 projects have been completed since the inception of the program, representing a \$60 million investment of federal, state and local dollars. Historically, 50 percent of the annual allocation has been awarded to local governments and 50 percent for state projects. However, since 1990, only \$160,000 of the annual allocations have been directed toward improving the state park system.

A portion of the LWCF Act (Section 6(f)(3) in CRF part 59) protects property acquired or developed with LWCF by requiring that these properties be retained in perpetuity and used for public outdoor recreation. Should the property no longer provide public outdoor recreation or be transferred to a non-eligible sponsor, it must be replaced with property of equal value and equivalent usefulness from an outdoor recreation perspective.



Nearly all Montana cities, towns, counties, Indian Tribes, and many school districts have outdoor recreation areas such as playgrounds, ballfields, outdoor swimming pools, and tennis courts funded through the LWCF program. LWCF funding has been used for acquisition or development at most of Montana's 41 State Parks, 132 of the 312 state fishing access sites (FAS), and several state Wildlife Management Areas. Sites funded with LWCF dollars are marked with a distinctive sign logo (at left), which can be seen at recreation sites at thousands of sites all over the country.

Through the 30 year life of this program, available funding has varied dramatically, peaking at more than \$3 million in Montana in 1979. In recent years, funding declined from \$224,000 in

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

FY 1995 to zero in FY 96, when Congress failed to appropriate funds for the state-side of the program. It is anticipated that there will be no funding available for FY 97; the future of the program is unknown. Alternative outdoor recreation funding programs are being considered at the federal level, and by a new nation-wide heritage and conservation coalition based in California.

As of 1998, LWCF work is being coordinated by the (grade 16) resource program manager in the Helena Office.

**Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program  
(Wallop-Breaux Act)**

In 1950, the U.S. Congress passed a bill creating the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program. This legislation--supported by conservationists, anglers, tackle manufacturers, and many others throughout the nation--was modeled after the highly successful Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1939, which affixed a tax on hunting-related items such as guns and ammunition in an effort to help restore game animals and their habitat.

The Sport Fish Restoration Act created a 10 percent federal excise tax on certain types of fishing equipment, with proceeds to be used at the state level to improve sport fisheries and water access. The main Congressional sponsors of the bill were Senator Dingell from Michigan and Representative Johnson from Colorado, hence the program came to be known as the "Dingell-Johnson" Act.

As a result of Sport Fish Restoration Legislation, every time someone purchases a fishing rod, tackle box, lure, or other fishing-related equipment, they are financially assisting fisheries programs and motorboat access in Montana, including accesses at both state parks and fishing access sites. The funding may not be used at state parks which are not water-based.

In 1984, Congress passed significant amendments to the bill, which more than tripled funding, adding motorboat fuel, fish finders and other products to the list of taxed goods. Because the sponsors of that legislation were Senator Wallop from Wyoming and then Representative Breaux from Louisiana, this amended Federal Aid program has recently been referred to as "Wallop-Breaux."

The excise tax on fishing products is paid by the manufacturer, but is factored into the cost of the product. The "user pay" concept is reinforced by the requirements of the program: As a condition for receiving the Federal Aid funds, for example, states cannot use their state license

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

dollars for any purpose other than sport fisheries management. The penalty for “diverting” license dollars to other uses could result in the loss of Federal Aid funds.

Each year, the excise tax and motorboat fuel taxes are collected by the U.S. Treasury, then turned over to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service then returns it to the states on the basis of the following formula: Forty percent of the funds received are based on the land and water area of the state, while the remaining sixty percent of the funds are based on the number of people who have purchased fishing licenses. Because of this allocation process, FWP receives over \$5 in Federal Aid funds for every paid fishing license holder.

In recent years, Montana has been receiving over \$5 million a year from this funding source, with a total of \$68 million since 1952. With revenue received from license sales and the Federal Aid Program, FWP funds a number of important programs and projects.

Motor boaters benefit when a portion of their federal fuel taxes paid are returned to the state as Federal Aid dollars. So far, more than a dozen of Montana’s water-based state parks have received motorboat access improvements with Federal Aid funds. Currently, the Act mandates that 12.5 percent of the funds be used to develop and maintain motorboat-related facilities.

In addition to selected state parks, over 100 fishing access sites throughout Montana have been improved with Federal Aid funding, and some were originally purchased with this money. Sites which have received Wallop-Breaux dollars have signs posted with the Federal Aid logo (see below).



In addition to the recreational improvements discussed above, Sport Fish Restoration funds provide critical benefits to Montana’s fisheries programs. For example, most of FWP’s fish hatchery personnel and field biologists performing fisheries management work are funded with Sport Fish Restoration funds. Other important projects include major hatchery renovation projects, aquatic education, research, habitat protection, and angler surveys.

There is currently an effort in Congress to establish a new program modeled after the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration legislation for wildlife species which are not hunted or fished. The Fish and Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative, as it is called, would establish a nation-wide tax on outdoor items such as tents, hiking boots, binoculars, and field guides in order to support wildlife and non-consumptive outdoor recreation programs (e.g., trails) which are not



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

funded by hunting and fishing license dollars. In addition to benefits to outdoor recreation and wildlife education programs, an important goal of the initiative is to provide adequate support for non-game fish and wildlife species before their numbers reach the point where they are endangered, and subject to costly and often controversial restoration efforts.

### **Historic/Cultural Program**

Historic and cultural resources represent some of the most important and vulnerable components of the Montana State Park system. The mission of the Montana State Parks Historic/Cultural Program is to help conserve and manage state park archeological artifacts, cultural landscapes, historic and prehistoric structures, museum objects, and ethnographic resources. A new Visitor Services Bureau Chief was hired in early 1998 to help coordinate Historical and Cultural Program from the Parks Division Headquarters Office in Helena.

During the last decade, there has been increased recognition given to the cultural and historical resources in the state park system. By the late 1980s, these resources had been progressively deteriorating for a long time, and were in a severe state of disrepair. Early in the 1990s, the State Parks Division, concerned private citizens, and other government entities recognized the seriously degraded condition of the irreplaceable historic resources within the state park system. As a result, increased emphasis was placed on the cultural and historic parks. As the Parks Division began looking for strategies to broaden interest, friends groups began to emerge to support local state parks in their areas, and numerous partnerships developed.

A fresh emphasis was given to Montana's historic and cultural parks when the Department sponsored a bill in the 1991 Legislature (HB) 1008, authorizing the Parks Division to divert coal severance tax deposits for preserving and protecting cultural and historic resources. The 1993 Legislature--through HB 687--extended the sunset on HB 1008 authorizing further preservation work through the 94/95 biennium.

As a result of the temporary improvement in funding, more specialized training was provided, detailed research and inventories were conducted, priorities established, site plans prepared, and extensive stabilization and restoration construction work was completed.

Two state park employees have received preservation carpentry training through the U.S. Forest Service Preservation Training Program (called "Learn By Doing."). As a result, ongoing preservation work can be accomplished at Bannack State Park by park staff, who in turn can offer advice to other staff members throughout the state. The following sites have received historical preservation work in recent years as a result of the improved funding and other resources:

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* Bannack
- \* Chief Plenty Coups
- \* Granite
- \* Elkhorn
- \* Rosebud Battlefield
- \* Ulm Pishkun
- \* Fort Owen
- \* Giant Springs
- \* Makoshika
- \* Pictograph Caves
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns
- \* Parker Homestead

Pictograph Caves and Chief Plenty Coups State Parks were recent recipients of the Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIP) Grant Program funding, administered through the Department of Commerce. The TIP Program utilizes a portion of the Accommodation Tax revenues to help improve key elements of Montana's tourism infrastructure, including important cultural and historical sites. At Pictograph, funding was used to research ways to help preserve the Pictographs, which have gradually faded over time. The money at Plenty Coups will be used to help rehabilitate the Chief's home, with the intent of eventually opening it to the public.

Major future funding sources to meet the needs of the historic/cultural program are uncertain. Some parks fee revenue will be used, bed and coal tax funds tapped where appropriate, and grant programs utilized. However, at present there is not a long-term dedicated funding source for state park historical preservation, while deterioration of these fragile sites continuous.

### **Internship Program**

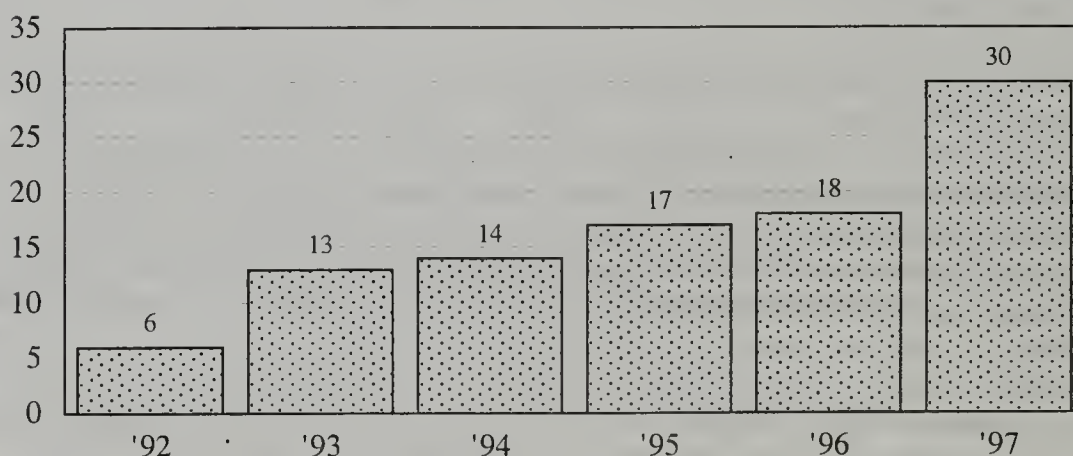
The Internship Program is an academic program for undergraduate and graduate students to gain practical experience by working full or part-time in positions that relate to their fields of study and career interests. Interns can earn academic credits, as well as compensation (although not all internships are paid). The program is open to all students attending a Montana institution of high learning, including public and private universities and/or colleges, community colleges, vo-techs, and Native American colleges. In the past, there was even a program which brought Russian student interns to FWP to work for a period of time.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The Intern Program began in 1992 with 6 interns assisting with various Parks Division projects. By 1997 the program had grown to 30 interns, and had branched out to other FWP divisions (see figure IV-8). The interns typically work for 10-12 weeks (400-480 hours); interns eligible for pay as well as academic credit earn \$6.50 per hour (equivalent to grade 6). The students have regular work schedules; typically they have specific tasks assigned to them to complete during their internship.

**FIGURE IV-8**

**PARKS DIVISION INTERNS**



The interns are mainly funded by Fish, Wildlife & Parks budget, but as the program has increased in size and diversity, friends groups, federal agencies, and support organizations have come forward to assist with funding, housing, and transportation. The budget for interns in 1996 (\$114,000) would be worth 7 FTE, if they were considered regular state employees.

The students provide quality work at low cost, and add diversity, energy, and new ideas. The program provides a way for potential future employers (FWP) to meet workplace needs, while at the same time, providing a professional experience for the students participating. The intern program relates directly to the educational goals of both the Parks Division and FWP as a whole, and continues to increase in size. In many cases, the Division would not be in a position to do the work accomplished by interns due to staff limitations.

Both the intern and volunteer programs are coordinated in the Helena Office through the (grade 14) Field Support Supervisor.

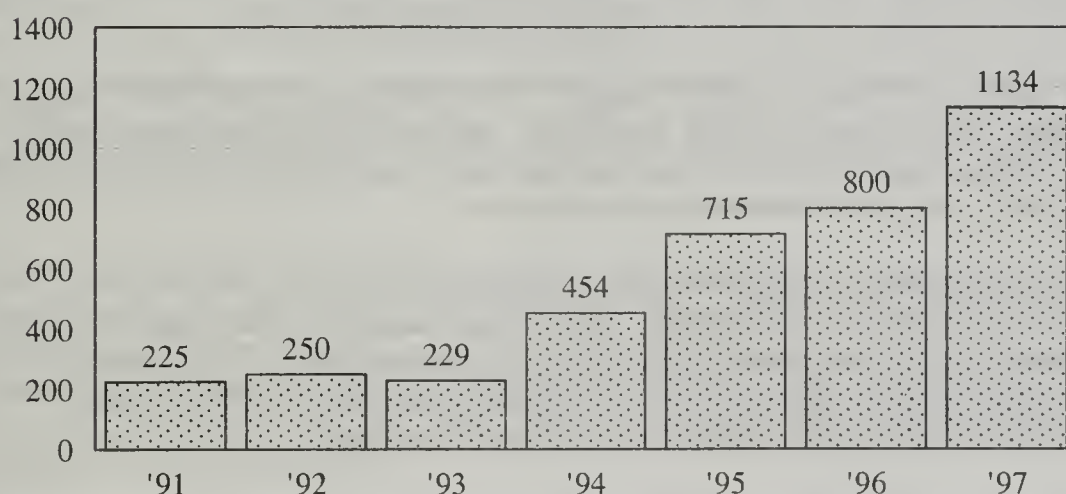


## **Volunteers**

The Parks Division Volunteer Program has grown substantially since its inception in 1991. The first year of the statewide program, the Parks Division utilized 225 volunteers, who donated 19,551 hours to the parks system. By 1997, the number of volunteers had increased to 1,134, with a total of 41,422 donated hours, a 112 percent jump during the seven year history of the program (see figure IV-9).

**FIGURE IV-9**

### **PARKS DIVISION VOLUNTEER USE**



In 1997, regional use of volunteers was as follows:

- \* Region 1: 41 volunteers, contributing 10,935 hours.
- \* Region 2: 241 volunteers, contributing 3,736 hours.
- \* Region 3: 484 volunteers, contributing 7,503 hours.
- \* Region 4: 107 volunteers, contributing 8,870 hours.
- \* Region 5: 153 volunteers, contributing 7,754 hours.
- \* Region 6: None (no state parks).
- \* Region 7: 108 volunteers, contributing 2,624 hours.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

By definition, volunteers work without compensation, and are not regular employees. The duties performed by volunteers are typically different than those performed by park staff. Although the number of volunteer hours worked in 1997 was equivalent to 20 FTE, volunteers are not intended to replace paid staff; rather, volunteers' efforts supplement and enhance existing park services.

The Parks Division statewide volunteer program is broken into four major areas of concentration: campground hosts; visitor center attendants; naturalists; and special project volunteers. The volunteer campground hosts serve as a liaison between park users and the park staff. The hosts stay in the campground in order to be directly accessible for guests; they assist visitors by answering questions, explaining rules, and providing information about the park. Hosts must become familiar with local points of interest and know the location of services that may be requested by campers. A host may perform light maintenance work around the park or make minor repairs when park staff are not present. Hosts do not enforce park regulations; rather, they courteously advise campers of unintentional or minor violations, or contact law enforcement officials if a more serious infraction occurs.

Volunteer visitor center attendants are responsible for greeting and assisting visitors at park visitor centers. When regional staff are not on duty, volunteers provide information and assistance, conduct tours, run slide and/or video programs, keep attendance records, sell books and other items, and perform other duties as necessary.

Volunteer park naturalists may be involved in a wide range of activities, including the following: assisting park staff in preparing and presenting interpretive programs; developing and maintaining displays and exhibits; greeting park visitors and providing information; leading hikes and tours; writing informative articles and researching area history; and performing routine maintenance on trails and interpretive facilities.

Volunteers for special projects assist park staff in accomplishing "one time" or special yearly projects. Duties can be very diverse, including but not limited to the following: preparing for and assisting with events; providing information about projects; assisting with presentations; conducting on-site surveys; assisting with clean-up; helping plant trees/flowers, building fence; and a variety of other activities.

The Parks Division Volunteer Program has become an integral component of the Division's efforts, and has stimulated similar efforts in the rest of the Department.

### **Accessibility: Crossing the Barriers Program**

In 1991, FWP adopted the Crossing the Barriers Program to improve disabled accessibility, after recognizing that many of its sites, facilities, and programs were not accessible. In addition, FWP is a public agency which receives federal funds, and is required to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

FWP began the process by conducting an inventory of Department programs, areas, and facilities to determine existing accessibility and evaluate the potential for providing disabled access. During this early phase of the program, FWP also produced a transition plan for increasing disabled access.

Each year following completion of the plan, selected Department sites have been retrofitted, reconstructed, or had new components added to improve accessibility. The Department is currently following the technical guidelines published by the federal Recreation Access Advisory Committee, called "Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreational Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas." Examples of facilities and programs that have become accessible include boating, fishing, picnicking, swimming, watchable wildlife, trails, and cultural and historic sites.

Currently, some of the state parks with accessible facilities include the following: Lone Pine, Finley Point, Salmon and Placid Lakes, Lost Creek, Beavertail Hill, Council Grove, Lewis & Clark Caverns, Missouri Headwaters, Bannack, Giant Springs, Pictograph Caves, Chief Plenty Coups, Greycliff Prairie Dog Town, Cooney Reservoir, Makoshika, Spring Meadow Lake, Wayfarers, Black Sandy, and Lake Elmo. FWP has developed a brochure which lists accessible sites (see appendix H).

The Department will be continue to evaluate program accomplishments and program goals; as a result, the transition plan will be updated. To date, monitoring indicates that accessible camping opportunities remain deficient, and will likely be identified as a priority for future work.

### **Parks Safety Program**

In 1992, the Parks Safety Program was developed and a Parks Safety Coordinator appointed. As a result, a Parks Safety Committee was established to assess the safety needs of the parks operations statewide.



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The Safety Program's framework, goals, and objectives were developed by the Committee. A three year plan was compiled, which identified four major goals, as follows: maintain a healthy and safe workforce; increase training opportunities; conduct regional safety audits; and establish a program to evaluate public safety. Annual funding is provided to regional offices to address safety needs.

As part of the Program, a safety needs inventory and assessment of parks personnel and equipment was conducted. The survey identified that several pieces of older heavy equipment were below an acceptable safety standard because they lacked equipment such as roll over bars, seat belts, and back up beepers. The survey also reflected a need for personal safety gear such as safety glasses, hard hats, respirators, etc. As a result of these needs being identified, funding was provided and the necessary equipment purchased. A personal protective equipment (PPE) policy was later developed to define when Division employees would be required to wear certain types of protective safety gear.

Miscellaneous safety training has been provided on a regular basis, and the Safety Training of Parks Personnel Program (STOPP) was developed to provide training to all the Division's unit leaders. The objective of the STOPP program is to "train the trainer," giving them the tools to conduct training sessions in the field covering all aspects of safety. The STOPP program will continue on an annual basis, along with various other training offered through other divisions and agencies.

In addition to the above, an immunization program for hepatitis B is ongoing, and available to all parks employees who may be at risk or concerned about contracting the virus. Finally, a Parks safety resource library was established, and has expanded to include videos covering many different field activities and health concerns. Other safety resource materials are being provided to parks regional offices such as a monthly "Safe Employee" newsletter and OSHA newsletter.

## **Law Enforcement**

There are many different demands for law enforcement services in the Parks Division. Besides the typical needs for public supervision in campgrounds, picnic areas, and other recreation sites in state parks, law enforcement services are needed in the OHV program, the snowmobile program, on the Capitol Grounds, in fishing access sites, and at state-owned watchable wildlife sites.

Law enforcement services are provided by three different programs within the Department. First, fish and game wardens continue to play an important role in the enforcement of state

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

park rules and regulations. In most situations wardens are the only enforcement staff to visit sites on a regular basis, and the Department relies on them to routinely take the lead. At sites where a park ranger is present, wardens are sometimes called in to the lead officer's role if the rangers run into problems. Wardens are the key enforcement contacts for the OHV and snowmobile programs, as well as fishing access sites and state-owned watchable wildlife sites. The demands on game wardens time does not allow adequate coverage of recreation sites.

Park rangers are the second enforcement element. In the 1991 Legislative Session, FWP received authority to establish a corps of park rangers, to help supplement existing enforcement services. No new staff were authorized by the Legislature; existing staff were assigned co-lateral law enforcement duties and sent to the Montana law enforcement academy to become peace officers. These officers are restricted by statute from carrying firearms, and their jurisdiction is limited to state-owned property.

The third enforcement component is the ex-officio program, which Montana State Parks readily adopted when authorized to do so. The ex-officio program was initially established to assist game wardens, but the Division uses it to authorize permanent and seasonal staff to enforce park rules.

A recent legislative audit identified a number of problems in the program, and a review team was assembled to recommend improvements. The major concern related to whether staff were being asked to perform duties for which they were not adequately trained. The review team has released a new policy for the program, but its future is still unclear at this point.

In addition to the above, FWP relies on city, county, and state law enforcement agencies to provide back-up and take the lead where appropriate. Finally, enforcement on the State Capitol Grounds is covered by city and county officers as well as a private security firm.

The current situation is that the efforts related to enforcement, fee compliance, site protection, and the provision of visitor safety are inadequate to meet the increasing demands at Montana's State Parks. Current levels of vandalism and rule violations are a concern, and are not expected to decrease.

In early 1998, the Parks Program began implementing a new parks violation reporting campaign, modeled after the successful TIP-MONT ("turn in poachers") number. The program is called "violations in parks" (VIP-MONT), although it utilizes the same 800 number as TIP-MONT. The intent is to encourage people to more readily report vandalism and other non-fish and game related crimes. A reward system is planned as an incentive.

## **Concessions and Commercial Use of Parks**

In recent years, there has been growing discussion about how best to manage concessions and commercial use in Montana State Parks. Concessions and commercial use are similar, but different enough so they are discussed separately, as listed below:

**Concessions:** As discussed here, a concession is a business that sells goods to the public on park property. Currently, a small number of concessions are permitted within Montana State Parks, varying in size from small ice cream vending trucks, to a full-service sandwich and gift shop, to marina operations. Revenue generated from these concessions typically runs between \$5,000 to \$7,000 per year. Fees are paid either on a one-time flat fee basis (usually smaller concessions), or a percentage of total gross sales generated throughout the year (typically a minimum of 5%).

The process for allowing these concessions to operate on State Park land is done a number of ways, depending on the operation's size and anticipated revenue. Approval can occur through a permit, personal services contract, or a concession lease contract, all of which are based on division policy. In most cases, the agreement is for a period not to exceed ten years.. For some smaller operations (where revenue is expected to be less than \$5000 per year), the term is for not more than 2 years. For small concessions with no permanent structures (i.e., an ice cream truck), a one year contract may be used.

**Commercial Use:** Commercial use involves a business that brings clientele into a park and provides a service to them (e.g., guided nature walk, float trips, etc.), or a business that otherwise uses park resources for the purpose of financial gain or promotion.

Currently, the most extensive regulated commercial use in the state park system is on the Smith River. On the managed section of the Smith, a limited number of outfitters are authorized to draw permits to guide clients down a section of the river (see appendix F for list of Smith River outfitters on current fee schedule).

In recent years park managers have seen an increase in the use of sites for filming commercials and movies. The Division adopted a filming policy that set parameters and guidelines for managers to issue filming permits in state parks and fishing access sites. A fee for the use of the site is negotiated with the filming company, based on the length of time filming will occur, the number of people involved in the production, and the level of impact the filming will have on the site and its visitors.

Commercial use of parks for group tours (e.g., watchable wildlife outings, ghost town tours, and organized camping outings) appears to be increasing. The Division is currently planning



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

on participating in an agency-wide initiative to register and inventory all commercial users who utilize Department land. In addition, commercial users along the Alberton Gorge stretch of the Clark Fork River will be registered, with future users limited to those who can prove historical use of this stretch of the river. Additionally, a fee structure will be implemented to help compensate for impacts commercial users have on the resources in the Alberton Gorge.

### **Information and Promotion**

Promotional activities have not been a major emphasis for the Park Division until the last few years. As tourism has grown in Montana, however, visitors have demanded and expected information about state parks to be readily available in a variety of forms. Because of the increasing importance of tourism and an emphasis on inter-governmental cooperation, the Division has formed stronger links with Travel Montana, the state tourism promotion bureau. Much of the material functions on a number of different levels: it markets and advertises state parks, on the one hand, while also filling an important educational and information role.

In recent years a number of publications have been developed to inform visitors and the general public about Montana State Parks, and special events, programs, and opportunities (e.g., “early bird” passports) associated with the parks. Some of the most commonly used publications include the following: state parks guide; state parks calendar of events; campground and day use information booklets; rules and regulation brochures; and individual park brochures. The Travel Montana visitor information brochure also lists state parks as accommodation options.

Other commonly-used tools to market Montana State Parks and related events include the following: newspaper articles; radio and TV spots; videos; paycheck notices; reminder and information postcards; newsletters; posters; information booths at malls, colleges and universities, and conferences; articles in both state and national magazines; travel kiosks; presentations at conferences and other events; and FWP’s Internet homepage (<http://FWP.MT.GOV>).

The Parks Division has worked with Travel Montana on developing a system of inter-active video kiosks, which provide a wide range of visitor information from both the private and public sector. The electronic kiosks have been distributed to important visitor locations around the state, and contain site descriptions, maps, photos, and video footage of Montana State Parks, fishing access sites, and other FWP sites and information.

Finally, the Division also has an annual state-wide parks poster contest for fifth grade students. The contest is intended to enhance understanding and awareness of state parks, and

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

to provide an opportunity for children to creatively depict their ideas about specific park-related themes which are selected every year.

It is worth noting that marketing and promotional activities are not appropriate for every site or event. Visitation at some sites and events may be reaching the point where they should not be promoted, both to preserve resources and retain a high quality visitor experience. From this perspective, marketing and promotion can play a useful role in helping manage use and distribute visitation to lesser-used times and places.

## **Relationship to Other Agencies, Programs, Plans, and Initiatives**

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships have been a part of the Parks Division for many years, and they are increasing in importance as FWP and other agencies strive to increase efficiency, pool funding sources, and communicate more effectively.

Typically, Parks Division partnerships involve other state or federal agencies which share in the operation and/or maintenance of a particular site, but there are also various types of partnerships with private citizens, local governments, universities and colleges, and variety of other groups, clubs, organizations and non-profit establishments.

A sampling of current parks and recreation-related FWP partnerships is listed below:

- \* **Hell Creek State Park:** FWP; Walleyes Unlimited; the Army Corps of Engineers; and a private concessionaire
- \* **Fort Benton Visitor Center:** FWP; Bureau of Land Management (BLM); and the City of Fort Benton
- \* **Ulm Pishkun State Park:** FWP; Cascade County Historical Society; a local support group; the Optimists Club; Chambers of Commerce; City of Great Falls; local landowners; and all seven Montana Indian tribes.
- \* **Thompson Chain of Lakes:** FWP; U.S. Forest Service (USFS); Plum Creek Timber Company; friends groups; and local landowners.
- \* **Hauser Lake (Black Sandy) State Park:** FWP; BLM; and Montana Power Company (MPC). More detailed information about cooperative efforts with MPC is provided later in this chapter.
- \* **Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center:** FWP; USFS; MPC; and the City of Great Falls.

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* **Chief Plenty Coups State Park:** FWP; the Crow Tribe; and friends group.
- \* **Bannack State Park:** FWP; Montana Historical Society; State Historic Preservation Office; Friends of Bannack Association; and Historic Sites Commission.
- \* **Makoshika State Park:** FWP; Museum of the Rockies; and friends group.
- \* **Fort Owen State Park:** FWP; Stevensville Historical Society; and City of Stevensville.
- \* **Clark's Lookout State Park:** FWP and Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.
- \* **Giant Springs State Park:** FWP; MPC; Rivers' Edge Trail Group; Giant Springs Heritage State Park Commission; and City of Great Falls.
- \* **Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor:** FWP; BLM; Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC); Plum Creek Timber Company; Missoula County; and local landowners.
- \* **Smith River Corridor:** FWP; USFS; local landowners; and other interested parties.
- \* **Wildlife Viewing Opportunities:** FWP; BLM; Bureau of Reclamation (BOR); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Montana Chamber of Commerce; and local friends groups.
- \* **Intern Opportunities:** FWP; universities; colleges; vo-techs; Indian colleges; community colleges; Crossroads; and International Intern Association.
- \* **Volunteer opportunities:** FWP; American Association of Retired Persons (AARP); senior centers; Good Sams Club; schools; National Volunteer Group; and various clubs, groups, and nation-wide organizations.
- \* **Various Other Programs:** Montana Conservation Corps; Tourism Advisory Council; Montana Department of Transportation (MDT); Montana Parks and Recreation Association (MRPA); Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI); Department of Commerce; Lutheran Brotherhood; Nature Conservancy; National Park Service; and others.

## **Friends and Support Groups**

Friends and support groups for Montana State Parks started to emerge in the 1980s when various new acquisitions, improvements, and expansions changed the look and functions of the state park system. In many cases, the Legislature would purchase or give a parcel of property to the park system with no accompanying money for development or maintenance. This chronic under-funding led to the emergence of friends and support groups who were concerned about what was happening in parks they were interested in.

The first "friends groups" served as sounding boards for park management, and their main role was one of advisory capacity on important park issues (e.g., what facilities should the park have?). As support groups got more sophisticated and memberships grew, by-laws were



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

often adopted, guidelines drawn up, and the communication between the Parks Division and the group tended to become more formal.

Currently, there are more than 20 friends groups assisting Montana State Parks in a variety of ways (see partnership section and appendix I for a listing of some of these groups). Many of these groups focus on providing financial assistance to the parks, while others still have the main function of providing advice on park management. Support groups have also aided the state park intern program, assisted with special events, and helped with marketing, tourism, and education efforts. The assistance of friends groups has been vital to the success of the state park system; they have often been instrumental in the formation of sound relationships between various parks and the communities which surround them.

In addition to groups which have coalesced around particular parks, two organizations have formed which have an interest in the entire state park system. These groups--the Montana State Parks Foundation and the Montana State Parks Association--are concerned with the long-term direction of the park system, policies and management, and funding. While these groups communicate with the Helena and regional offices, they are independent of the Parks Division. In the last two years, the Montana State Parks Association has become involved in various fund raising and promotional initiatives involving Montana State Parks.

### **Montana Conservation Corps**

The purpose of the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) is to provide conservation training and educational opportunities to youth, while helping agencies and other organizations complete worthwhile projects. The initial catalyst for the MCC was a pilot program put together by FWP, in response to legislation passed in 1989 authorizing the creation of a State Conservation Corps. Based on this precursor, the MCC was established as part of the Human Resource Development Council in 1991.

In 1992, the Parks Division and MCC Inc. secured a grant from the National Commission on Community Service. The federal funds for this program were originally administered within the Parks Division; however, legislative action transferred administration of the funds to the Governor's office in 1993.

During the past few years, the MCC crews have completed projects at Lewis and Clark Caverns, Parker Homestead, Lake Elmo, and other sites. In recent years, however, FWP participation in the MCC program has been more limited than in the past, with only two or three projects completed per year. Because 30 to 50 per cent of the crew costs must now be paid for by the sponsoring agency, cost has become a significant limiting factor on the amount

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

of work which can be done. As a result of these changes, the Parks Division has been working successfully with other non-profit groups and organizations to supplement operations and maintenance work. Examples include other job training programs, county welfare departments, the Green Thumb program, school and scouting groups, and others.

### **Montana State Parks and Wildlife Interpretive Association**

The Montana State Parks and Wildlife Interpretive Association was established about eight years ago as a non-profit organization, with the intent of helping fund interpretive and educational projects for FWP and other agencies such as the Forest Service.



The Association raises money through the sale of books, maps, and other materials at the FWP Helena headquarters, regional headquarters, and some state parks. Most of these materials are outdoor-related. All of the proceeds are used to finance interpretive and educational projects.

Examples of the types of projects funded by the Association include brochures, trail signs and improvements, educational posters, videos, and other interpretive materials. Many of the brochures produced for individual state parks have been partly funded by the program.

Virtually all of the projects funded have been cost-share efforts with FWP or other agencies. Typically the more partners willing to fund a project, the better chance it has to receive Association funding.

The application process involves sending information describing various aspects of the proposal to the FWP Helena Office. The project is then presented to the Association's Board of Directors, who must approve it. The Board meets approximately every six weeks.

### **Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI)**

The Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI) is an organization of the various state and federal agencies in Montana that are involved in tourism and recreation, including FWP.

The main rationale behind the formation of MTRI was to ensure that the diverse agencies that play a role in Montana's growing tourism and recreation industry are communicating and cooperating. A common goal of the group is to facilitate excellence in tourism and

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

recreational experiences, while protecting and conserving key social, cultural, recreational, and natural resources.

By combining and sharing funding, research, planning, and other resources, MTRI provides a vehicle for coordinating government-sector projects that might otherwise not be possible through the efforts of one agency. The initiative helps ensure participating agencies are moving toward common goals, reducing the chance of inadvertently working at cross-purposes.

The most significant initial MTRI project was cooperating with Travel Montana in developing and implementing the Interactive Travel Information System, a computerized video kiosk network for travel and recreation information. The kiosk units--which have now been distributed to a number of high volume tourist locations throughout the state, include easily-accessed (touch screen) recreation and travel information, including video footage and photographs of recreation sites, restaurant and hotel information, updated road reports, and the capacity to print out maps and other information. Another early MTRI project involved inventorying the travel and tourism information (e.g., brochures, pamphlets, etc.) participating agencies were producing, in order to weed out redundancy and increase efficiency.

MTRI--which was initiated through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 1994--includes the following agencies: Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. National Park Service; U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; Montana State University Extension Office; Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, University of Montana; Montana Historical Society; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Montana Department of Transportation; Travel Montana, Montana Department of Commerce, and; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Staff from the participating agencies meet regularly, with director-level meetings with the governor's office planned for several times a year. A new coordinator for the program was hired in early 1998 by Travel Montana.

Another separate but related cooperative venture which Parks Program staff regularly participate in is the annual Governor's Conference on Recreation and Tourism. The conference--which is planned by Travel Montana and other cooperators--has become an important vehicle for exchanging information and creating linkages between public and private sector components of the tourism and recreation industry.



## Montana's 1998-2002 Strategic Plan for Travel and Tourism

Along with dozens of other public, private, and non-profit participants, Parks Program staff assisted in the development of a five year strategic plan for Montana's travel and tourism industry. The planning effort--which began in early 1996 and was completed in December, 1997--was coordinated by Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana, along with Travel Montana.

Because of its strong focus on protecting and enhancing Montana's cultural, natural, and recreational resources, the Strategic Plan for Tourism and Travel shares many common themes with both 2020 Vision and the State Trails Plan, which is currently under development. The foundation of the Tourism and Travel Plan is a vision statement, which is as follows:

*Tourism is a leading year-round industry in Montana based upon the preservation and enhancement of the state's natural, cultural, and historical resources. Growth and development of tourism is balanced with environmental and cultural sensitivity, providing an authentic and unique guest experience. In a spirit of cooperation, the public and private sectors of the tourism industry work together, as well as with other key industries in the state. Operating in this manner, tourism fosters an enhanced overall quality of life for residents and guests while providing employment and economic benefits more equitably across the state. As a result, tourism is recognized as a vital industry by residents and policy makers alike (ITRR 1997b)*

Following from this vision, the Plan included five principle themes for the next five years, which were further broken down into more specific goals and actions areas. Plan themes and goals are as follows:

**THEME 1:** *Encourage the development of sustainable tourism while maintaining the quality of life and protecting natural, cultural, and recreational resources.*

**GOAL 1 A)** *Determine, measure, and monitor the positive and negative impacts (economic, social, environmental) of tourism and take action as appropriate.*

**GOAL 1B)** *Focus the promotion and development of MT's tourism industry upon the natural, historical, cultural, and recreational resources the state has to offer.*

**GOAL 1C)** *Conduct market and product research which collects information applicable to the objectives of this strategic plan.*

**GOAL 1 D)** *Support the resolution of land use conflicts involving residents, non-residents, and commercial/recreation providers.*

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

***THEME 2: Support the development and maintenance of quality infrastructure.***

*GOAL 2A) Strive for consistent information signs across the state (includes roadway, interpretive, access, and trail).*

*GOAL 2B) Encourage all forms of public transportation into and around the state.*

*GOAL 2C) Encourage alternative transportation (i.e., shuttle and tour systems) in sensitive areas.*

*GOAL 2D) Enhance trail systems where necessary and appropriate.*

*GOAL 2E) Enhance and maintain long-term legal access to public sites.*

*GOAL 2F) Identify and prioritize infrastructure needs.*

***THEME 3: Secure diversified long-range funding sources for tourism development and promotions.***

*GOAL 3A) Continue accommodations tax as a funding source for tourism and development.*

*GOAL 3B) Support federal and state funding for recreation and tourism programs.*

*GOAL 3C) Seek private industry funding.*

*GOAL 3D) Educate residents and policy-makers regarding the impacts of tourism.*

*GOAL 3E) Nurture non-traditional partnerships of resident, government, and tourism industry people.*

***THEME 4: Extend the benefits of tourism throughout Montana.***

*GOAL 4A) Distribute tourism development and promotion by geography, season, resources, and activity throughout the state.*

*GOAL 4B) Continue appropriate rural tourism development.*

*GOAL 4C) Increase state-wide visitor expenditures through appropriate tourism development and promotion.*

*GOAL 4D) Develop and promote the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.*

***THEME 5: Strive for quality visitor experiences.***

*GOAL 5A) Monitor visitor experience and satisfaction.*

*GOAL 5B) Encourage training programs for companies/organizations who deal with visitors.*

*GOAL 5C) Recognize and address the needs of international travelers.*

*GOAL 5D) Develop and implement effective delivery of travel information (ITRR 1997b).*

*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The specific action areas listed under each goal are included in the appendix J. As of early 1998, Travel Montana and the MTRI organizations (see earlier section) were in the process of organizing the actions each group agreed to undertake to help implement the Plan. MTRI will be an important vehicle for helping coordinate implementation of the Plan.

### **Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan**

The Montana Power Company (MPC) completed a Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan for a substantial portion of the Missouri-Madison River corridor in 1996, in cooperation with the public, user groups, local governments, and resource managers in the corridor, including FWP.

A component of MPC's relicensing application with the Federal Energy Relicensing Commission (FERC), the Plan and its implementation measures are intended to help mitigate impacts of the nine dams the company operates in the corridor. The Plan encompasses the Madison River and much of the upper Missouri River corridor, from Hebgen Lake to Fort Benton. The corridor does not include the reservoirs behind the Canyon Ferry Dam or the Tosten Dam (and the river stretch between them), as these facilities are operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, respectively.

The intent of the planning process was to inventory recreation resources in the corridor, establish a baseline of information for monitoring trends, set up a process for identifying recreation demands, and initiate an on-going revolving funding mechanism to address these needs. An important part of the planning process was an extensive series of surveys conducted at recreation sites in the corridor designed to gauge public satisfaction and identify problems and conflicts. Corridor resource and facility information was compiled in an extensive geographic information system (GIS), which--along with indicators and standards established during the process--will be used to help monitor changes in the corridor.

Decisions on what projects to fund are made by a Steering Committee composed of the cooperating partners. The Committee was established by an MOU signed by MPC, FWP, BLM, USFS, and Madison, Cascade, Gallatin, Broadwater, Lewis and Clark, and Choteau Counties. The Committee will utilize the criteria established in the Comprehensive Management Plan--along with on-going public input--to select new acquisitions and projects.

The major funding mechanism developed through the process is a revolving trust fund established by MPC (and now managed as an independent non-profit), which can be used to finance the acquisition, development, and annual operation and maintenance of recreation sites



*Chapter IV: Parks Division Organization, Programs, and Activities*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

selected through the planning process. The fund was initiated with approximately \$5 million that MPC scheduled for recreation site acquisition and development. Participating agencies are expected to match MPC contributions; for each matching dollar, MPC proposes to add the same amount back to the trust fund.

The trust fund's principal is available for land acquisition if an agency or non-profit organization agrees to reimburse the fund in an established time frame. This mechanism will allow land managers and other organizations to move more quickly in securing funding for acquisition opportunities which otherwise might slip away. Interest on the fund (estimated to be approximately \$400,000 annually) will also be accessible for acquisition, development, operations, and maintenance starting five years after the fund's initiation.

In addition to the above, MPC will match agency contributions, dollar for dollar, for recreation site expenditures adjacent to MPC-operated reservoirs, and along the Missouri River from Ulm to Rainbow Dam, and from Morony Dam to Carter Ferry. MPC will also contribute a 25% match for agency contributions on remaining river reaches between reservoirs for projects recommended by the Steering Committee. MPC's yearly matching contributions must not exceed the amount of interest earned annually by the fund (Dames & Moore, et al. 1996).

MPC announced plans to sell its dams and generating plants in 1998. At this writing, it is not clear who the new owner(s) will be, but they will be required to operate under the same FERC relicensing requirements as MPC, so the basic elements laid out in the Plan are expected to remain intact.

# V

## THE STATE PARK SYSTEM: CLASSIFICATIONS, INVENTORIES, OPPORTUNITIES

### Classification of Park Division Lands

#### State Parks

In the early 1990s, the Parks Division began to move away from multiple classifications of park resources in order to make it easier for the public to identify sites. Sites previously listed as state monuments, state historic sites, and state recreation areas were classified as state parks, in addition to the sites which already had that designation. Highway and entrance signs were changed, and a logo was introduced (see below) to aid in the identification and recognition of the state park system.



This consolidation of sites under the state park logo and designation was useful in establishing a clearer identity for the system, but for planning and management purposes, it is still useful to look at ways the various units in the system can be categorized, as discussed below.

#### Recreational, Historical, and Natural Classifications

One way to categorize parks is according to whether their major resource value is primarily recreational, historical, or natural. This is not a clear-cut exercise, because most of the parks have elements that fall into more than one category. Nonetheless, if the parks were organized according to this scheme, they could be organized as follows:

##### Recreational:

Ackley  
Beavertail Hill

##### Historical:

Anaconda Stack  
Bannack

##### Natural:

Greycliff Prairie Dog Town  
Lewis and Clark Caverns

*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

**Recreational:**

Cooney  
Flathead  
Frenchtown Pond  
Giant Springs  
Black Sandy  
Hell Creek  
Lake Elmo  
Lake Mary Ronan  
Logan  
Placid Lake  
Salmon Lake  
Spring Meadow  
Thompson Falls  
Tongue River  
Whitefish Lake

**Historical:**

Beaverhead Rock  
Chief Plenty Coups  
Clark's Lookout  
Council Grove  
Elkhorn  
Fort Owen  
Madison Buffalo Jump  
Parker Homestead  
Pictograph Cave  
Rosebud Battle Field  
Ulm Pishkun  
Granite (classified as  
affiliated land)

**Natural:**

Lone Pine  
Lost Creek  
Makoshika  
Medicine Rocks  
Missouri Headwaters  
Sluice Boxes  
Painted Rocks  
Pirouge Island  
Smith River

The Smith River is a unique component of the state park system; it is more of a recreation management "program," than a park defined by specific geographic boundaries. The 61 mile managed corridor is managed by the Department as a result of the Smith River Management Act (23-2-401) passed in 1989 to protect the resources of the Smith, and minimize conflict by regulating use. The Smith River is currently the only river in the state where FWP has the legislatively authorized authority to manage social conflict.

**Primitive Parks**

During the 1993 legislative session, a bill was passed designating certain parks as "primitive." The primary intent of the legislation was to limit further development, rather than designate sites which were remote or undeveloped. The legislation prohibited the addition of new facilities in primitive parks, with the following exceptions: public health and safety improvements; replacement of existing facilities with the same materials; and the establishment of hiking trails and limited signing. The addition of electrical lines, sanitary dump stations, and the creation of new roads or paving of gravel roads are prohibited under the Act. An additional requirement is that Montana residents may not be charged entrance and camping fees at primitive parks, with the exception of camping fees at Missouri Headwaters and Thompson Falls.



*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Parks designated as primitive include:

- \* Ackley Lake
- \* Beaverhead Rock
- \* Council Grove
- \* Wild Horse Island
- \* Lost Creek
- \* Madison Buffalo Jump
- \* Medicine Rocks
- \* Missouri Headwaters
- \* Natural Bridge
- \* Painted Rocks
- \* Pirouge Island
- \* Sluice Boxes
- \* Thompson Falls

Lake Mary Ronan and Deadman's Basin were also designated as primitive parks in the original legislation. In the case of Lake Mary Ronan, local users were interested in seeing some improvements which would have been prohibited under the Act. As a result, the 1995 Legislature deleted the park from the primitive list, and replaced it with the Big Pine Fishing Access Site. Deadman's Basin retained its primitive designation, but is now being managed as a fishing access site.

### **Destination/Management Classifications**

The 1989 System Plan included a classification system of state parks which was discussed earlier in this document. While the categorization used in the earlier plan is no longer appropriate for the current system, some of the same evaluation criteria have been adopted for this analysis. Categories, evaluation criteria, and parks are listed below:

**Category 1:** These are the "flagship" parks in the system. These parks contain natural, cultural, and recreation resources of state-wide or even national significance, and offer multiple activities for visitors to choose from. Category 1 parks draw visitors from beyond their immediate area, and are important elements in their regional tourist economy. With the exception of Flathead Lake, these sites have an on-site staff or volunteer presence. Category 1 parks are as follows:

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Parks with Designated Campgrounds:

- \* Bannack
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns
- \* Makoshika
- \* Flathead Lake

Day Use Parks:

- \* Giant Springs

**Category 2:** Category 2 parks have resources of regional or state-wide significance. Most of these parks draw visitors from their surrounding region or local communities. Parks in this category have a wide range of resources and facilities. Some of these parks could have potential to be elevated to category 1 with the purchase of additional property or the addition of certain facilities; primitive parks designation, however, limits what could be done at some of these sites.

Parks with Designated Campgrounds:

- \* Ackley Lake
- \* Beavertail Hill
- \* Cooney Reservoir
- \* Black Sandy
- \* Hell Creek
- \* Lost Creek
- \* Medicine Rocks
- \* Missouri Headwaters
- \* Painted Rocks
- \* Lake Mary Ronan
- \* Logan
- \* Placid Lake
- \* Salmon Lake
- \* Thompson Falls
- \* Tongue River Reservoir
- \* Whitefish Lake
- \* Smith River

Day Use Parks:

- \* Chief Plenty Coups
- \* Council Grove
- \* Fort Owen
- \* Madison Buffalo Jump

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* Lake Elmo
- \* Frenchtown Pond
- \* Greycliff Prairie Dog Town
- \* Lone Pine
- \* Spring Meadow Lake
- \* Pictograph Cave
- \* Rosebud Battlefield
- \* Ulm Pishkun

**Category 3 Parks:** Parks in this category are either undeveloped or have minimal development (e.g., parking lot, interpretive signs). In some cases, the sites are either off-limits to the public (e.g., Anaconda Stack), are difficult to locate (e.g., Clark's Lookout), or have limited accessibility and/or have been intentionally preserved in an undeveloped state (e.g., Pirogue Island and Sluice Boxes). Other sites in this category are limited to one or two structures and a small piece of property (Elkhorn and Parker's Homestead). With the exception of Elkhorn, visitation to these sites is very low. They are not destination parks, except for people with strong interest in the resources they preserve (e.g., Lewis and Clark buffs). None of these sites have designated camping areas; they have low potential to ever being category 1 sites, although eventual reclassification to category 2 sites is a possibility for some.

- \* Anaconda Stack
- \* Clark's Lookout
- \* Beaverhead Rock
- \* Elkhorn
- \* Parker Homestead
- \* Pirogue Island
- \* Sluice Boxes
- \* Granite (officially classified as an affiliated land)

Of the non-category 1 sites listed above, the park with the greatest short-term potential to become a major, category 1 visitor attraction is Ulm Pishkun, the site of what may be the world's largest bison jumps. The driving forces behind this potential change are plans for the following: a planned visitor and educational center; major interpretive improvements and outdoor exhibits; additional acreage to FWP holdings; areas for live bison displays; and space for Indian pow-wows.

Planned changes at Spring Meadow Lake are expected to substantially change use patterns, and increase visitation of people from outside the Helena area. The site--which will be oriented around and utilize several rehabilitated historic buildings--will eventually have a new wild animal rehabilitation facility, a nature learning center, and areas for outdoor hands-on learning



*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

opportunities. As a result of these improvements, Spring Meadow could be pushed toward more of a category 1 site of state-wide importance.

Another category 2 park--Missouri Headwaters--contains natural and cultural resources of state-wide and national importance. In addition, the Headwaters is adjacent to I-90, and readily accessible to a large number of visitors. However, because of the primitive park designation, the capacity to make significant changes in this park is severely restricted, even if they were improvements desired by a broad majority of visitors.

### **Affiliated Lands**

The Division also has management responsibilities for a number of "affiliated lands." The range in management responsibilities is very broad, from river corridor management on the Blackfoot River, to maintenance of the State Capital grounds, to cooperative arrangements with local governments and other entities.

The list of affiliated lands managed by the Parks Division include the following:

- \* Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor
- \* Centennial Acres
- \* Deep Creek Rifle Range
- \* East Gallatin Park
- \* Granite Ghost Town (listed in state parks brochure)
- \* Lake Josephine
- \* Les Mason Park
- \* Little Bitterroot Park
- \* Montana Agricultural Center
- \* State Capitol Grounds (listed in state parks brochure)
- \* Whittecar Rifle Range
- \* Mule Ranch Vista (located at the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area)

Unlike the Smith River, the Blackfoot River corridor has many access points and no special legislation that establishes a basis for managing the amount of recreation use. The Blackfoot is managed within the context of voluntary cooperation from a broad range of land owners, users, and agencies coming to a consensus on issues related to public use of public and private lands within the corridor.

As discussed in the recommendations section of this Plan, Parks Program staff will work with the FWP Commission and other interested parties in exploring the possibility of moving the

*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

Blackfoot River Corridor and the Smith River Program into a new management category called “Recreational Waterways.” This category could also include rivers where there is public and political interest in a more active recreational management role on the part of FWP (e.g., the Alberton Gorge). Depending on the scope of this effort, it may require additional funding and legislation granting FWP the authority to manage social conflict on rivers on a state-wide or river-specific basis.

### **Fishing Access Sites**

The Division manages more than 300 Fishing Access Sites (FAS), which are intended to provide public access to streams, rivers, and lakes. Facilities vary, but tend to be primitive; a boat ramp, access road, parking area, and latrine are typical. Camping is allowed at some FAS sites, while others are limited to day use. An effort is currently underway to classify development levels in all units of the FAS system according to a two-tier system (i.e., primitive and developed).

In some cases, the functional differences between FAS units and state parks are not readily apparent. There have been cases where parcels designated as state parks have been reclassified as FAS units (e.g., Deadman’s Basin), while visitors to some of the more developed FAS (e.g., Chief Looking Glass) may find them almost indistinguishable from a state park. In order to help distinguish them from state parks and other recreation areas, FAS sites are marked by a distinctive roadside sign (a fish and fishhook).

Funds for the maintenance and operation of FASs come from the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (Wallop-Breaux) Program, as well as fishing license revenues. License revenues are not used to maintain any of the sites in the state park system, with the exception of the Smith River corridor. Restrictions on how funding can be used for these different types of sites has affected the ability of FWP to effectively recategorize them. A separate comprehensive planning effort is currently underway for the FAS system.

## **Park Resource Inventory**

The discussion of state park resources below includes the system land base, facilities and infrastructure, as well as natural, cultural, and recreation resources.

### **Park System Land Base**

As of 1996, Montana's 41 State Parks comprised 25,400 acres. This acreage is a decrease from 30,000 acres in 1990, when the system had more units than at present. In addition, the 13 "affiliated land" sites managed by the Parks Division comprised 1,500 acres, with another 21,900 acres included in the 313 unit FAS system. The combined area total for state parks, affiliated lands, and FAS units managed by the Parks Division is 48,800 acres.

Montana's State Parks do not have a consistent geographic distribution throughout the state (see figure V-1). The majority of the parks are located in the western half of Montana, although the largest park in the system is in the eastern part of the state. There is only one park in the northeastern quadrant of Montana, and FWP region 6--which covers a sprawling section of northeastern Montana--contains no state parks.

### **A Comparison With Other Public Land Systems**

The land base in Montana that is administered by local, state, federal, and tribal governments is substantial, amounting to over 39 million acres, or nearly 42% of the state. The remaining 58% is privately held. The acreage included in Montana State Parks represents a very small portion of the total public lands in the state, and is dwarfed by the amount of property managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, State School Trust Land, and FWP's own wildlife management areas.

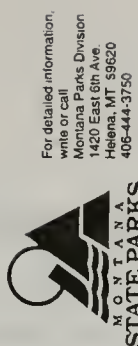
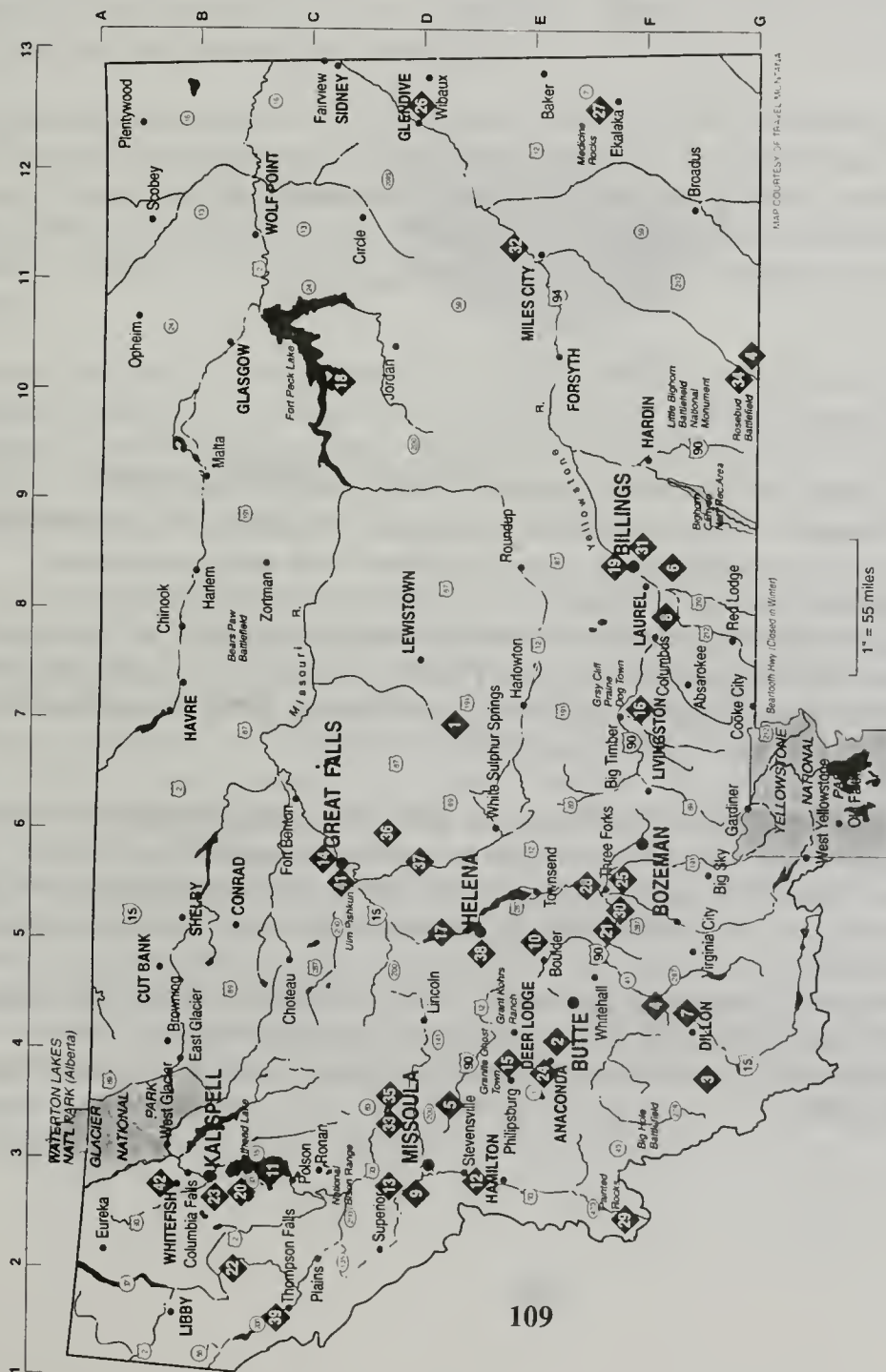
The percentage breakout of major governmental landownership in Montana is as follows: federal government--29.3%; Tribal governments--7.2%; and state government--5.6% (see figure V-2/EQC 1996). By a wide margin, the two federal agencies with the most acreage are the Forest Service with 17.6 million acres and the BLM, with 8.1 million acres. State School Trust land encompass approximately 5.1 million acres (FWP 1988).

The overall land ownership balances have not shifted significantly in the past twenty years. One major change in the allocation of property rights which has changed during the past two



FIGURE V-1

# MONTANA STATE PARK DISTRIBUTION

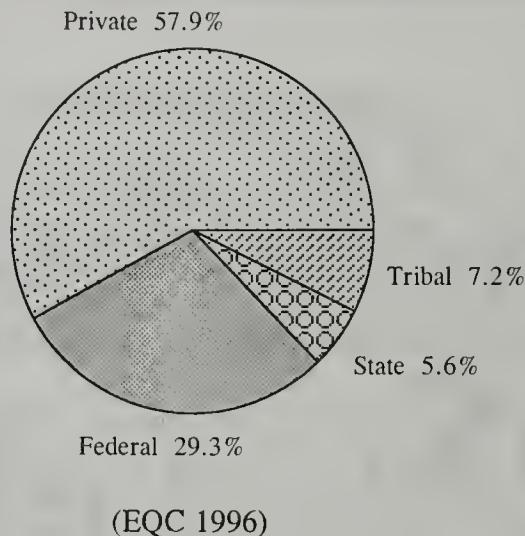


## State Parks

- 1 Ackley Lake (D7)
- 2 Anaconda Smelter Stack (E4)
- 3 Bannack (F3)
- 4 Beaverhead Rock (F4)
- 5 Beavertail Hill (D3)
- 6 Chief Plenty Coups (F8)
- 7 Clark's Lookout (F4)
- 8 Cooney (F8)
- 9 Council Grove (D3)
- 10 Elkhorn (E5)
- 11 Flathead Lake (B3)
- 12 Fort Owen (E3)
- 13 Frenchtown Pond (D3)
- 14 Giant Springs (C6)
- 15 Granite Ghost Town (E4)
- 16 Greycliff Prairie Dog Town (F7)
- 17 Hauser Lake (Black Sandy) (D5)
- 18 Hell Creek (C10)
- 19 Lake Elmo (F8)
- 20 Lake Mary Ronan (B3)
- 21 Lewis & Clark Caverns (E5)
- 22 Logan (B2)
- 23 Lone Pine (B3)
- 24 Lost Creek (E4)
- 25 Madison Buffalo Jump (E5)
- 26 Makoshika (D12)
- 27 Medicine Rocks (E12)
- 28 Missouri Headwaters (E5)
- 29 Painted Rocks (F2)
- 30 Parker Homestead (E5)
- 31 Pictograph Cave (F9)
- 32 Pirogue Island (E11)
- 33 Placid Lake (D3)
- 34 Rosebud Battlefield (G10)
- 35 Salmon Lake (D3)
- 36 Sluice Boxes (D6)
- 37 Smith River (D5)
- 38 Spring Meadow Lake (D5)
- 39 Thompson Falls (C1)
- 40 Tongue River Reservoir (G10)
- 41 Uln Pishkun (C5)
- 42 Whitefish Lake (B3)

Montana  
State Parks Map

**FIGURE V-2**  
**MONTANA LAND OWNERSHIP PATTERNS**



decades has been the amount of land in conservation easements. Between 1978 and 1996, the amount of land in conservation easements in Montana increased from 840 acres to nearly 500,000 acres, with half of the increase occurring in the last five years (EQC 1996). According to 1994 data from the Land Trust Alliance, Montana ranked first in the nation in acreage included in conservation easements. Within FWP, the Wildlife Division has been very active in securing conservation easements; only a very small fraction of the Montana land in conservation easements is managed by the Parks Division.

The total Montana State Park acreage (25,400 acres) is much less extensive than many state park systems elsewhere in the country. According to information compiled in the 1996 National Association of State Park Directors Report, state park acreage in Montana--the fourth largest state in total land area--ranked thirty-ninth in the nation. The states with the greatest amount of state park acreage were Alaska (2,891,600 acres), California (989,700 acres), New Jersey (287,700 acres), Pennsylvania (267,600 acres), New York (257,100 acres), Minnesota (231,400 acres), and Colorado (206,100 acres). There are individual state parks in other systems which are significantly larger than the combined acreage of the entire Montana State Park system (NASPD 1996).

### **Overview and Implications of the Park System Land Base**

The amount of acreage varies greatly between various units in the Montana State Park system, ranging from a high of 8,800 acres at Makoshika, to tiny holdings such as Elkhorn, which only include two buildings situated on .15 acres. In addition to fee title ownership by the Parks Division, Montana State Parks also include land managed under various types of leases, easements, and agreements with other landholders. The Division leases a number of its affiliated lands to other parties to manage.

The relatively small land base in the Montana State Park system is somewhat deceptive, given the importance of the resources in the system. Pictograph Cave State Park, for example, preserves one of the most significant Native American cultural sites in the Northern Great Plains, yet is only 22 acres in size. Fort Owen State Park, a key frontier historical site, is situated on only 2 acres. Another historical site--Parker Homestead--includes less than 2 acres.

However, the lack of a buffer zone around these small parks makes them vulnerable to negative impacts on a long-term basis. Even some of the parks with larger land bases fail to adequately protect the key resources for which they were established. Ulm Pishkun, for example, only includes a portion of the buffalo jump within its boundaries, while Rosebud Battlefield does not contain several key battle sites in the area.

In addition to preserving (at least portions of) critical cultural sites on relatively small acreage, other units in the system utilize small amounts of land to provide important recreational water access. Heavily-used Black Sandy State Park, for example, offers fishing, camping and access to Hauser Lake on only 17 acres of land. The same is true for Whitefish Lake State Park, which is a key access to a largely private recreational lake; this park encompasses less than 11 acres of land, a minor component of the total shoreline. The Yellow Bay unit on Flathead Lake includes less than 12 acres of land, yet because of development and the soaring price of land in the area, provides a recreational access which would be increasingly difficult to replicate. Like the cultural sites mentioned above, these recreational sites provide a value to the public which transcends the modest size of the land base.

The urban state parks in the system host a tremendous amount of visitation on a small land base. Frenchtown Pond and Spring Meadow Lake, for example, are among the most heavily visited units in the system, yet both are under 60 acres in size. Lake Elmo and Giant Springs are both under 300 acres in size, yet accommodate substantial visitation; in 1995, Giant Springs was the most heavily visited unit in the system.



*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

In spite of the exceptional quality of some of the resources in the system, the relatively small land base in the park system does provide constraints on land-based recreational activities which require large amounts of space. Trails are a good example of this limitation. According to an inventory of Montana trails, total FWP trail mileage in Montana was only 28 miles, less than 1% of the state total. By contrast, 98% of the Montana's trail mileage is located on land managed by the Forest Service or National Park Service (Yuan and Covalt 1994). Only a handful of the largest parks in the system (e.g., Lewis and Clark Caverns and Makoshika) are sizeable enough to encompass the potential of a well-developed trail system.

Hunting is another activity which is limited by the relatively small size of the typical Montana State Park. While some hunting does occur in Montana State Parks--particularly in eastern Montana-- the activity is generally much less significant than what occurs on other state, federal, and private land (a state park hunting policy is included in the last section of the Plan).

## **Natural Resources**

Protecting natural resources is a primary goal of the Parks Division, and the State Park system contains some exceptional natural features. However, providing recreational opportunities and preserving cultural resources have arguably been stronger driving forces in the acquisition and development of the system than securing natural resources.

The present configuration of Montana State Parks does not reflect a systematic attempt to preserve characteristic examples of the state's major types of environments. To date, there has not been a comprehensive, state-wide attempt to identify key natural resources for protection in the state park system. Various types of inventories have been done for particular parks (e.g., bird lists, etc.) in conjunction with management plans and other processes, but these have not been system-wide in nature.

An important reason for the above is the substantial amount of outstanding natural resources in the state are managed by federal agencies, including the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the national wildlife refuges managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The latter agency in particular, has oriented its land acquisitions around outstanding wildlife habitat. Within FWP, the wildlife management areas managed by the Wildlife Division have had a similar mission.

A major focus of the national wildlife refuges and FWP's wildlife management areas has been game species, although many non-game species have also benefited from these acquisitions. Some of the National Wildlife Refuges, in particular, were established primarily to protect non-game animals (e.g., bison at the National Bison Range, trumpeter swans at Red Rock

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Lakes). Non-profit organizations such as the Nature Conservancy, the Montana Land Reliance, and various regional and locally-based land trusts have helped preserve a significant amount of land in Montana, sometimes with an orientation toward non-game species. Conservation easements have become an increasingly important tool to preserve habitat for both game and non-game species.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program--in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy--conducts inventories of Montana plant and animal species, and maintains a data base on population distributions (a species of special concern inventory done for Montana State Parks is included in appendix K). The Non-Game Program in FWP's Wildlife Division is also engaged in researching and monitoring non-game wildlife populations.

In spite of a historical emphasis on recreation and cultural protection, a number of parks in the system do preserve a substantial amount of wild and relatively pristine acreage, including Makoshika, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Sluice Boxes, Rosebud Battlefield, Ulm Pishkun, and the Wild Horse Island unit in Flathead Lake. The Smith River State Park Program is responsible for managing recreational use of a spectacular natural resource, although most of the land in the corridor is not managed by FWP. And some state parks do preserve significant populations of rare species, such as the colony of western big-eared bats at Lewis and Clark Caverns. Outstanding wildlife resources are also present on Wildhorse Island, which includes a notable population of bighorn sheep.

## **Cultural Resources**

Cultural resources are one of the strengths of the Montana State Parks system, which is a repository for many of the state's most valuable cultural heritage sites, some of which are of national significance. From the passage of the Montana State Park Enabling Legislation in 1939 to the present, the preservation of important cultural sites has been a key part of the system's mission.

The range of cultural site types in the park system is varied, include the following:

- \* A homestead which is a rare remnant from the frontier settlement era (e.g., Parker Homestead).
- \* Native American sites, including one of the most significant collection of pictographs on the Northern Great Plains (e.g., Pictograph Cave); two buffalo jumps (Madison Buffalo Jump and Ulm Pishkun, possibly the largest in the world); spiritual sites (e.g.,

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Medicine Rocks); a travel and trading crossroads (e.g., Missouri Headwaters); and the ranch home of one of the great Crow chiefs (Plenty Coups).

- \* A key battle site between Native Americans and the U.S. Military (e.g., Rosebud Battlefield).
- \* Early ghost towns representing the gold and silver rush era (e.g., Elkhorn, Granite, and the exceptionally well-preserved and nationally significant Bannack).
- \* A frontier military post (e.g., Fort Owen).
- \* Key Lewis and Clark Expedition sites (e.g., Beaverhead Rock, Clarks Lookout, and especially Giant Springs and Missouri Headwaters).
- \* Historic Civilian Conservation Corp buildings (e.g., Lewis and Clark Caverns).
- \* Other places of cultural significance (e.g., historically important geographic features such as Missouri Headwaters).

Out of the 41 State Parks, 19 are culturally significant. These sites include over 70 historical buildings; approximately 32 of these have recently received major preservation work. The park system includes 12 listings on the National Register of Historic Places; three of these have been designated National Historic Landmarks--the most significant historical designation in the country.

The following State Parks are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

Anaconda Smelter Stack  
Bannack (National Historic Landmark)  
Beaverhead Rock  
Chief Plenty Coups  
Clark's Lookout  
Elkhorn - Fraternity Hall  
Granite - Wier House and Miner's Union Hall  
Madison Buffalo Jump  
Missouri Headwaters - (National Historic Landmark)  
Pictograph Cave (National Historic Landmark)  
Rosebud Battlefield  
Ulm Pishkun  
Fort Owen



*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

In addition to the above, Bear's Paw Battleground--which is owned by the Parks Division but now managed by the National Park Service--is a National Historic Landmark. Other parks not listed above with strong historical/cultural elements include the following:

Council Grove  
Lewis & Clark Caverns  
Makoshika  
Parker Homestead  
Giant Springs  
Medicine Rocks

In addition to their importance, the cultural components of the Montana State Park system contain some of the most sensitive and irreplaceable resources in the state. A comprehensive inventory of the cultural resources of the state park system has never been conducted due to limited financial resources; if such an inventory were done, it would likely lead to many new and significant discoveries.

## **Recreation Resources**

The most important recreational resource in the Montana State Park system is water; the state parks and fishing access sites managed by the Parks Division provide the most comprehensive and systematic assortment of water access sites in the state. State parks are located on some of the most popular recreational water bodies in Montana, including Hauser Lake, Flathead Lake, and Cooney, Fort Peck, and Tongue River Reservoirs. While other agencies also provide significant water access, this area of recreation is one of the strengths of the Parks Division; in some cases, these sites provide the only public access.

All eighteen state parks classified as "recreational" in this plan are situated on a river or lake. Fourteen of these sites are located on a lake or reservoir, while the rest are on rivers. A total of twenty state parks have boat ramps, while another three provide hand launch access. The Finley Point Unit of Flathead State Park offers a marina, while four other parks offer boat and canoe rentals.

Principal water-based recreation activities at these sites include fishing, swimming, boating, canoeing, and water skiing. The most recent State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) indicated that swimming was the most popular water-based recreation activity by a large margin in Montana, followed by power boating, water skiing, rafting, and canoeing, in that order (fishing was not included in this list--FWP 1993). In addition, sites adjacent to

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

water--particularly those with beaches--tend to attract a considerable amount of informal use such as sunbathing, picnicking, wading, stone skipping, and other activities.

According to a 1996 survey of resident visitors conducted in nineteen state parks, recreational resources were ranked as the most important type of park resource, followed by natural resources, and cultural resources. This priority order also remained consistent in a mailout survey conducted of park passport holders the same year. The percentages of park passport survey respondents who indicated each type of resource was "very important" was as follows: 65%--recreation resources; 52% natural resources; and 28% cultural/historical resources. (Interestingly, non-resident visitors ranked natural resources most important in the on-site survey, followed by cultural/historic, and recreational.) According to the onsite park survey, the most commonly cited types of parks to be added to the system by resident and non-resident visitors alike were ones providing water recreation (Nickerson, Sargeant, and Moisey 1996).

Camping and picnicking are also significant recreational activities in Montana State Parks. Twenty-five parks offer camping, while picnicking occurs at most parks. According to the onsite state park survey, parks with campsites were the third most commonly mentioned type of park to be added to the system. The onsite survey also indicated that picnic tables were a facility preferred by 84% of resident visitors and 74% of the non-resident visitors, the highest desirability of any type of facility except drinking water. Group activities such as family reunions, weddings, and other social gatherings are common occurrences in Montana's State Parks, and are often oriented around picnicking or camping (Nickerson, Sargeant, and Moisey 1996).

Educational activities oriented around natural or cultural resources are an important form of recreation in Montana State Parks. Much of this is as informal as wandering through the streets of Bannack or Elkhorn with a brochure, or reading an interpretive sign. Other opportunities are more structured, such as interpretive tours, school presentations, or campfire talks.

Wildlife viewing and learning about wildlife are popular recreational pursuits in Montana State Parks. These occur in a number of different ways, ranging from observing wildlife in the field, reading interpretive signs and brochures about wildlife, or participating in tours or programs. The 1996 state parks survey demonstrated support for wildlife viewing opportunities: According to the on-site survey, 59% of the residents and 63% of the non-residents who responded felt wildlife viewing opportunities were a desirable opportunity in state parks. Mailout survey results indicated that 76% of the park passport holders felt wildlife viewing opportunities in state parks are important or very important (Nickerson, Sargeant, and Moisey 1996). FWP's Watchable Wildlife Program helps coordinate the planning and provision of wildlife viewing sites and information, both in state parks and at

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*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

other locations throughout the state. In addition to wildlife viewing, some hunting occurs in Montana State Parks, although it is only permitted at selected sites.

According to the most recent SCORP, dayhiking was the most popular outdoor recreational activity in the state by a significant margin (FWP 1993). Many state parks offer opportunities for at least short hikes, but there are few opportunities for longer day hikes or overnight trips. As discussed earlier, other agencies such as the Forest Service, the National Park Service, and BLM are the main providers of recreational activities which typically require a large land base (e.g., backpacking, horseback riding, etc.). Montana State Parks may never have the land base to compete with these agencies as suppliers of activities requiring extensive amounts of land, but the strategic addition of larger parks to the system--or adding more acreage to existing parks--would help enable the Parks Division to increase the quantity and quality of various types of land-based recreational activities.

Montana State Parks do not currently offer the kind of highly developed recreational opportunities found in some systems in other states (e.g., tennis courts, swimming pools, baseball diamonds, etc.). This is not likely to change during the time frame of this plan, although the urban parks in the system have a different set of demands on them than more rural sites. For example, playground equipment, places to ride bikes, and other activities for children are found at only a small number of parks; there may be additional sites where there is public interest in this type of opportunity.

### **Facilities and Infrastructure**

Montana State Park facilities and infrastructure include the “built” parts of the system such as roads, buildings, and boat ramps, and are intended to provide for the identified needs of the public and/or protect resources.

According to information compiled in the 1997 National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD) Annual Information Exchange, Montana’s State Park System ranks consistently as one of the most undeveloped in the country by virtually every criteria (NASPD 1997). This is not to say that Montana necessarily should model itself after these states, but the information is useful in helping indicate where Montana’s State Parks lie comparatively in terms of development.

Montana State Parks has only one site (Finley Point) which meets the definition of an “improved” campsite. (The report defines an improved sites as one with access to electricity, running water, modern toilets, either through hook-ups or central facilities, or both.) There are only four states in the country which reported fewer parks with developed campgrounds



*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

(and some of these may have simply not reported). Among Montana's neighboring states, the number of parks offering improved campsites were as follows: Idaho--13; Colorado--31; North Dakota--15; South Dakota--36; Utah--30; and Washington--80. Only Wyoming had fewer than Montana, with zero (NASPD 1997).

Another indication of comparative development level is the presence of cabins. In Montana, only one park (Lewis and Clark Caverns) has cabins available for rent (3 cabins). Nationally, 43 state park systems offer cabins in their state park system, 38 of which have more cabins in their system than Montana. Many of the reporting states offer a large number of cabins, including New York (756), Ohio (555), Oklahoma (437), Kentucky (338), Georgia (329), and Tennessee (322--NASPD 1997).

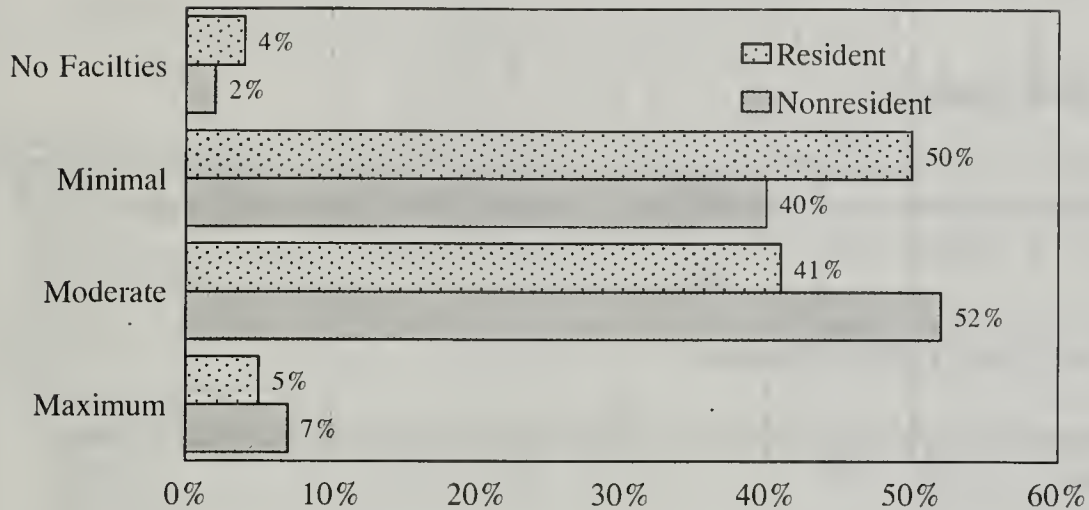
The Montana State Parks contain no lodges, golf courses, or year-round restaurants. Nationwide, 26 other state park systems offer one or more lodges. The states with the most sites with lodges include Kentucky (15), West Virginia (9), and Ohio (8). Twenty-three other state park systems offer golf courses. Those with the most golf courses include New York (27), Kentucky (16), and Oklahoma (9). Similarly, 22 other state park systems contain year-round restaurants (NASPD 1997).

Montana is a state filled with horse enthusiasts, but the state park system has no horse stables. By contrast, 22 other states reported at least one state park with a horse stable. Again, the point is not that the Montana State Park system should offer all the facilities that many other states have--Montana residents and visitors would disapprove of this-- but merely to illustrate that it clearly ranks among the least developed systems in the country.

According to a 1996 survey conducted at a wide range of Montana State Parks, the majority of visitors tend to prefer parks which are in the middle ground in terms of development (see figure V-3). Non-residents tend to prefer a higher development level than residents, probably in part because many of them come from states with more developed systems. The same survey indicated that RV, truck, and van camping, were the most widely used modes for overnight stays among both residents and non-residents, with tent camping ranking second (see figure V-4).

Thirteen Montana State Parks have been designated as "primitive" by the Legislature; in most cases, these parks generally contain few facilities, and require visitors to pack out garbage. The range of facilities found in Montana State Parks typically include roads, parking, campsites, interpretive information, latrines, garbage cans, drinking water, fire rings, picnic tables, and boat ramps.

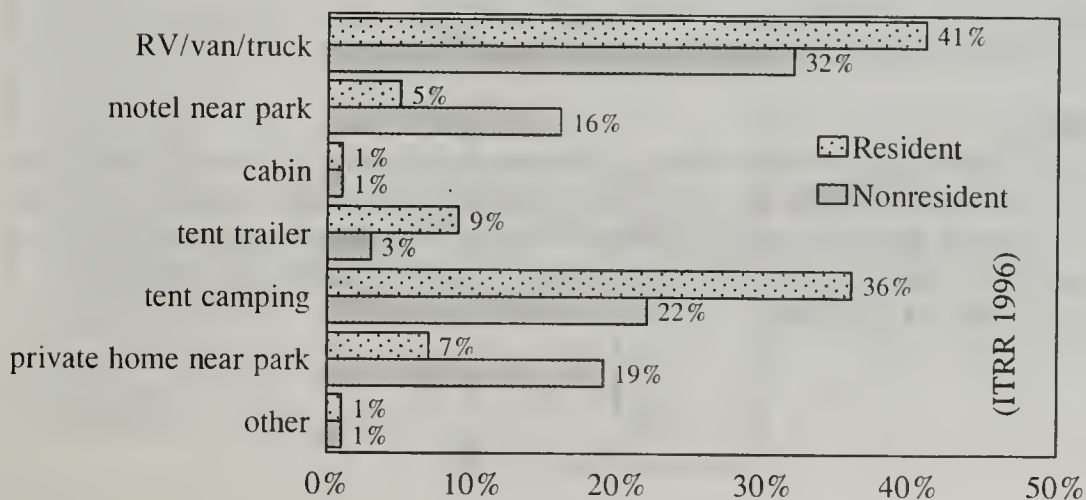
**FIGURE V-3**  
**DESIRED LEVEL OF FACILITIES**  
 (onsite survey)



(ITRR 1996)

No facilities: provide own water, pack out garbage  
 Minimal: water within area, pit toilets, fire rings  
 Moderate: flush toilets, paved roads, paved boat launch  
 Maximum: electric hookups, marinas, concessions

**FIGURE V-4**  
**TYPE OF OVERNIGHT STAY**  
 (onsite survey)



(ITRR 1996)

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The following section includes an inventory of some of the major facilities and infrastructure in the system. For the purposes of the summary, the six units of Flathead Lake State Park are counted as individual parks, for a total of 46 state park units. In cases when ten or fewer parks have a certain type of facility, the parks will be listed by name. A park-by-park listing of facilities is included in table V-1.

### **Park Visitor Centers**

Currently, only six Montana State Parks have visitors centers, some of which are very small. The centers have been divided up into several categories based on size and variety of functions, as described below:

#### **First Tier Visitor Centers/Museums**

These centers have sufficient space for well-developed interpretive displays and visitor programs.

**EXISTING:**

- \* Makoshika (currently the only first tier center in the system).

**PLANNED:**

- \* Spring Meadow Lake Nature Center (combination nature center and animal rehabilitation center).
- \* Ulm Pishkun (this new visitor center--which is scheduled to open in the spring of 1999--will focus on Native American use of bison jump).

#### **Second Tier Visitor Centers/Museums**

These centers occupy an intermediate role in the system, with a moderate amount of space for displays or undeveloped potential for more interpretation.

**EXISTING:**

- \* Chief Plenty Coups (center includes a fair number of displays on the Chief and Crow culture, but lacks sufficient space for storage and indoor programs. Restoration of the Chief's home could significantly increase the number of interpretive opportunities).
- \* Lone Pine (center was formerly used mainly as a meeting facility, but interpretive displays were recently added).



*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**TABLE V-1**  
**STATE PARK FACILITIES MATRIX**

PARK SITE	Camping	Group Facilities	Picnicking	Day Use Only	Showers	Dump Station	Visitors Center Inform.	Interpretive Displays	Hiking/Interp. Trails	Boat Launch	Hand Launch Access	Fishing	Swimming	Drinking Water	Pack-In/Pack-Out	Toilets
Ackley Lake	•	•	•							•		•	•	•	•	•
Anaconda Smelter Stack																
Bannack	•	•	•				♿	•				•		•		♿
Beaverhead Rock				•											•	
Beavertail Hill	•		•							•		•		•		♿
Chief Plenty Coups			•	•			♿	•	•			•		•		♿
Clark's Lookout				•										•		
Cooney	•		•		♿					♿		•	•	•		♿
Council Grove			•	•				•				•		•	•	♿
Elkhorn				•				•							•	
FLATHEAD LAKE																
Big Arm	•	•	•		♿				•	•		•	•	•		•
Finley Point	♿		♿							♿		♿	•	•		♿
Wayfarers	•		•			•				•		•	•	•		•
West Shore	•		•					•	•	•		•	•	•		•
Wild Horse Island				•					•			•	•		•	
Yellow Bay	•	•	•							•		•	•	•		•
Fort Owen			•	•			•	•								•
Frenchtown Pond			•	•		•					•	•	•	•		•
Giant Springs			♿	•			♿	♿	♿			♿		•		♿
Granite Ghost Town				•				•								
Greycliff Prairie Dog Town			•	•				•								
Hauser Lake (Black Sandy)	♿		♿			•		•		♿		♿	♿	♿		♿
Hell Creek	•	•								•				•		•
Lake Elmo			•	♿	♿		•	•	•	•		♿	•	•		♿
Lake Mary Ronan	•		•							•		•	•	•	•	•
Lewis & Clark Caverns	♿	•	•		♿	•	♿	•	•			•		•		♿
Logan	•		•			•				•		•	•	•		•
Lone Pine		•	•	•			♿	•	♿					•		♿
Lost Creek	♿		•					•	•			•		•	•	♿
Madison Buffalo Jump			•	•				•	•						•	
Makoshika	•	•	♿				♿	•	•					•		♿
Medicine Rocks	•	•	•											•	•	•
Missouri Headwaters	♿	•	•			•		•	•	•		•		•	•	♿
Painted Rocks	•		•							•					•	•
Parker Homestead				•												
Pictograph Cave			•	•				•	•					♿		♿
Pirogue Island			•												•	
Placid Lake	♿	•	•		♿			•		♿		•	•	•		♿
Rosebud Battlefield			•	•				•								
Salmon Lake	♿		♿		♿			•	•	•		•	•	•		♿
Sluice Boxes			•						•			•			•	•
Smith River	•										•	•	•	•		•
Spring Meadow Lake			♿	•					♿		•	♿	•			♿
Thompson Falls	•		•							•		•	•	•	•	•
Tongue River Reservoir	•		•							•		•	•			♿
Ulm Pishkun			•	•					•							
Whitefish Lake	•	•	•		♿					•		•	•	•		♿

♿ = Includes Disabled Access

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

### **Third Tier Visitor Centers/Museums**

Centers in this category include relatively small facilities which provide limited space for interpretive displays.

- \* Bannack (interpretive information combined with park headquarters functions).
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns (interpretive information combined with park headquarters functions. A new room-size cave replica in the center has expanded capabilities).
- \* Fort Owen (small museum).

### **Regional Headquarter Offices Within Park Boundaries**

The primary function of these offices is to serve as regional headquarters, but they also provide considerable space for interpretive displays and information relevant to the park they are situated within.

- \* Lake Elmo
- \* Giant Springs

### **Additional Parks with Visitor Center Potential**

Aside from the sites identified above, Montana State Park sites with the potential for new visitor centers are limited. Limitations include the small size of many parks, remoteness or lack of sufficient visitation, an insufficient number of compelling interpretive themes, and limited funding and staffing.

Because of its rich historical associations, Rosebud Battlefield could benefit from additional interpretation, although no visitor center is currently planned for the park. Missouri Headwaters contains rich historical and natural themes, a sizeable land base, and close proximity to I-90, but existing primitive park restrictions would prohibit construction of a visitor center, and a number of well-done outdoor interpretive signs are already in place. Pictograph Cave contains archaeological resources of national significance which could benefit from interpretation in a visitors center. Fort Owen also has additional potential if the site could be expanded.

Upgrades to some of the existing visitors centers may be appropriate at some point. The visitation levels and importance of the resources at Bannack and Lewis and Clark Caverns could warrant additional interpretation and visitor services. However, the existing facilities

*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

are housed in historic structures, which could be difficult to expand. At Lewis and Clark Caverns, remodeling of the existing visitor center was completed in 1996.

In addition to the above, the resources at Chief Plenty Coups could support additional interpretation. At some point, additional interpretation could also be appropriate at the Anaconda Stack, which is currently off-limits to visitors because of environmental contamination. If this were to occur, it would likely be combined with a local effort to interpret the rich mining and smelting history in the area.

In the future, there may be new additions to the park system which warrant visitor centers, or existing parks which have changed in function or use to the point where a visitor center would be appropriate.

### **Picnicking Facilities**

Picnicking facilities are the most common type of facilities in the state parks. In most cases these consist of parking, picnic tables, garbage cans, and sometimes latrines and drinking water. A breakdown of the types of sites is as follows:

- \* 39 park units have picnic areas with picnic tables.
- \* 12 provide picnic shelters.
- \* 8 picnic sites are disabled accessible (Finley Point, Giant Springs, Greycliff Prairie Dog Town, Black Sandy, Makoshika, Pictograph Cave, Salmon Lake, and Spring Meadow Lake).
- \* 4 sites provide group shelters (Frenchtown Pond, Giant Springs, Lake Elmo, and the Harry Horn Day Use Area at Wayfarers; a second shelter is planned for Lake Elmo).

### **Campgrounds**

Camping is offered at 25 state parks units. The majority of these sites have a rustic character, with gravel camp pads, picnic tables, pit toilets, and hand-pumped drinking water. In some cases raised pedestal fire rings are available. A breakout of campground facilities includes the following:

- \* 23 campgrounds allow some type of trailer. All but 3 of these have some limitation on length, including 7 units where the maximum size is 25 feet or less.
- \* 11 park units offer group camping.
- \* 9 have disabled accessible camp areas (Finley Point, Black Sandy, Lewis and Clark



*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

Caverns, Makoshika, Lost Creek, Missouri Headwaters, Beavertail Hill, Placid Lake, and Salmon Lake).

- \* 1 site has an improved campground with electric hookups and flush toilets (Finley Point).

In 1997, Region 2 staff began a management planning process for Frenchtown Pond; one of the issues being examined in the plan will be the possibility of adding a campground to the site.

### **Showers**

- \* 6 campgrounds (Cooney, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Big Arm, Salmon Lake, Placid Lake, and Whitefish Lake) will offer showers by the end of 1998; all are disabled accessible. Another day use park (Lake Elmo) offers showers for swimmers.

### **Dump Stations**

- \* 6 park units offer RV dump stations (Wayfarers, Frenchtown Pond, Black Sandy, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Logan, and Missouri Headwaters). In addition, an RV dump station is planned for a new rest area at Clearwater Junction, in the vicinity of Salmon Lake. A comprehensive listing and map of all RV dump stations in the state is published by FWP, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation.
- \* 2 parks (Finley Point and Placid Lake) offer boat dump stations.

### **Drinking Water**

- \* 32 park units have drinking water; in many cases the water source is a hand pump. 12 units have drinking water that is disabled accessible.

### **Toilets**

- \* 36 park units have some type of toilet facilities (21 sites have vault toilets--either wooden or concrete--while 15 are flush toilets with running water).
- \* 21 have disabled accessible toilets.

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Concessions (e.g., goods and services supplied by private vendors)**

\* 5 park units (Tongue River Reservoir, Hell Creek, Lake Elmo, Giant Springs, and Lewis and Clark Caverns) offer food and/or grocery concessions. Lewis and Clark Caverns has a small restaurant offering lunch items, snacks, and beverages.

**Boating, Swimming, and Water Access**

- \* 31 park units contain access to lakes, rivers or streams.
- \* 20 have boat ramps, either gravel or paved.
- \* 9 have boat docks, all of which are accessible to wheel chairs (Cooney, Salmon Lake, Lake Mary Ronan, Placid Lake, Black Sandy, Big Arm, Wayfarers, Whitefish Lake, and Finley Point).
- \* 3 offer hand-launch access (Frenchtown Pond, Smith River, and Spring Meadow Lake).
- \* 2 offer boat dump stations (Finley and Wayfarers).
- \* 1 offers at least limited boat rentals (Lake Elmo).
- \* 1 has an overnight marina with hookups (Finley Point).
- \* 1 offers seasonal life guards (Lake Elmo).
- \* Although most parks have access to swimming, only two have swimming platforms (Frenchtown Pond and Lake Elmo).

**Roads**

- \* 33 units have internal roads.
- \* 12 have paved roads.
- \* 11 have both paved and unpaved roads (Lewis and Clark Caverns, Missouri Headwaters, Chief Plenty Coups, Cooney, Greycliff Prairie Dog Town, Lake Elmo, Makoshika, Big Arm, Salmon Lake, Placid Lake and Lake Mary Ronan).
- \* 7 have unpaved but improved roads (Logan, Lone Pine, Beavertail Hill, Painted Rocks, Bannack, Black Sandy, and Madison Buffalo Jump).

In 1997, a comprehensive assessment was done on the condition of roads within and leading to Montana State Parks, in order to better understand priority needs.

*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

**Interpretive Information**

- \* 19 park units have interpretive displays, ranging from a few signs at Elkhorn to large indoor interpretive displays at Makoshika and Ulm Pishkun.
- \* 15 have interpretive trails (Giant Springs, Beavertail Hill, Lone Pine, Salmon Lake, Spring Meadow Lake, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Ulm Pishkun, Makoshika, Giant Springs, Lone Pine, Pictograph Cave, Spring Meadow Lake, Wild Horse Island, Big Arm, and the Harry Horn Day Use Area at Wayfarers), 4 of which are accessible (Giant Springs, Lone Pine, Spring Meadow Lake, and Wayfarers).

**Other services**

- \* 11 park units offer firewood for sale (in some cases this is sold by private concessionaires, in others by park attendants).
- \* 10 park units have public telephones (Spring Meadow Lake, Black Sandy, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Giant Springs, Hell Creek, Lake Elmo, Tongue River Reservoir, and Lone Pine, Wayfarers, and Big Arm--Placid, Salmon, and Whitefish Lakes will have phones installed in the near future).
- \* 11 park units offer firewood for sale.
- \* 3 have amphitheaters for programs (Lewis and Clark Caverns, Makoshika, and Salmon Lake).
- \* 2 have childrens' playgrounds (Giant Springs and the Harry Horn Day Use Area at Wayfarers).

**Threats to Existing State Parks**

A diversity of forces threaten the short and long-term integrity of Montana's state parks. A number of these threats occur throughout the state, while others are more specific to particular regions or parks.

Some of the threats which appeared a multiple of number of times in the information submitted by regional staff throughout the state included the following: subdivision of land, mining claims and other impacts on adjacent lands (and the resultant need for buffer zones); noxious weeds; fire; water quality and quantity issues; vandalism, theft of artifacts, conflicting uses across property boundaries; over visitation and user conflicts; and lack of staffing to protect and manage sites. A long-standing lands issue involving both existing and potential future state parks is allowing for greater flexibility in using and managing state school trust lands for recreational purposes.



*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The threats identified below are organized according to FWP region, and reflect input from regional state park staff, as well as Helena Headquarters Parks Division employees. In some regions, threats are discussed on a park-by-park basis, while others are assessed more generally, as for Region 1 below.

## **Region 1**

The most serious threats identified for Region 1 parks include the large-scale sale of private timber land, subdivision, and the pressure created by a growing population.

### **Sale of Timber Land**

The Plum Creek Timber Company is in the process of divesting a large amount of acreage in northwestern Montana which has traditionally been used for camping, hunting, fishing, and other types of outdoor recreation.

As Plum Creek divests this property, recreationists who have traditionally used these lands will be displaced and forced to use state or private facilities. Sale of Plum Creek land will cause a significant decrease in the amount of land available in the region for more primitive lakeshore recreation experiences.

Lake Mary Ronan is one park which could be affected, as half the lakeshore was owned by Plum Creek and open to public use. One consequence of the closure of this land to the public will be to concentrate use at the already-crowded Lake Mary Ronan State Park, as well as the three private resorts around the lake. Additional development on former Plum Creek lands around the lakeshore will alter the viewshed and possibly contribute to water quality problems.

The current sales on Ashley, Bitterroot, and Upper Thompson Lakes are just the beginning (as of 1997), and some lakes (e.g., Rainbow, Island) will go entirely private and will be lost completely for public recreation.

### **Subdivision**

Subdivision is one consequence of the process described above, but also a much broader issue. Around all Region 1 parks--but particularly at Lone Pine and Wild Horse Island and other Flathead Lake sites--development on private land adjacent to the parks is having significant impacts on visual aesthetics and recreational use patterns. This process is also increasing the

*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

complexity of park management, as private residences surround parks. Complaints about fires, noise, and management practices tend to increase as the density of development around parks increases.

### **Population Increases**

As the population of Flathead, Lincoln, Lake, and Sanders Counties increases there will be increased demand made upon the limited amount of state park land and other public access sites. At the same time, the increase in private residential development along lakes, rivers, and other natural resources will create pressure to limit the amount of public access available. The current land base, particularly around Flathead Lake, is not adequate to meet current use, let alone the demands which will come with higher resident population levels and large amounts of non-resident visitation; new sites are needed to help meet this demand.

## **Region 2**

Vandalism, groundwater contamination, subdivision, and other land use changes are among the threats which jeopardize the park resources in Region 2.

Missoula and Ravalli Counties are experiencing some of the most rapid rates of population growth in Montana. This growth will ultimately put increased demand on existing park resources, and make it more difficult to acquire new recreational opportunities. In addition, development pressure is making it more difficult to protect existing resources.

River recreation corridors in the Missoula valley are major recreation resources for area residents, and these are some of the areas most threatened by development pressure. Public use on the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor has increased dramatically, and there is uncertainty about how the natural and recreational resources in the valley will be affected over the long-term by possible gold mining activity.

Use of the Alberton Gorge on the Clark Fork River has also increased substantially during the last decade. Much of the corridor is comprised of large tracts of corporate land which is currently on the market. Increased development along the Alberton Gorge has the potential for reducing the quality of experience among floaters on the river.

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Salmon Lake**

- \* A subdivision on the north side of the park could affect the aesthetics and park management. Other future development around the lake, especially private cabins, would affect park aesthetics.
- \* Logging activities around the lake could affect park aesthetics.
- \* Increased use by boaters and jet skiers is causing some overcrowding at the day-use area and on the lake, reducing the quality of experience available.
- \* Groundwater contamination has affected the well in the day-use area. Contamination was caused by flooding during the spring of 1997. (This shallow, twenty-five foot deep well failed to produce a satisfactory sample during the summer after the flood.)

**Placid Lake**

- \* Logging activities around the lake could affect park aesthetics.

**Frenchtown Pond**

- \* Subdivisions and a sand and gravel pit in the vicinity of the park have already affected the aesthetics. Vegetative screening is needed to mitigate these impacts.
- \* Groundwater contamination is a threat, since the area has a high water table.

**Fort Owen**

- \* There is a possibility that the farmland surrounding the park will be subdivided, or that other land use changes could adversely affect the character of the park.
- \* Groundwater contamination has already become severe enough so that the well is only used to water vegetation.



*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

\* Because the park does not have a staff presence and the buildings are open to the public, the threat of vandalism is a serious concern.

\* There is insufficient parking at this site.

### **Council Grove**

\* Continued subdivision of the land around the park.

\* Reconstruction or rerouting of the irrigation ditch that goes through the entrance of the park could have negative effects.

\* High flows in the Clark Fork River could drastically affect the park. A flood in 1997 altered the flow of the river adjacent to the park, a process which could continue.

\* Stands of old-growth Ponderosa Pine were blown down by high winds during the winter of 1995-96. Some regeneration is occurring, but probably not enough to restore the park to its original condition.

### **Lost Creek**

\* Mining claims near the entrance could drastically affect park aesthetics. In addition, the Astoria Placer mining claim is an inholding with unclear ownership because of a major land trade occurring between the Forest Service and RY Timber.

\* When the pending land trade is completed, the Forest Service will have to do a travel plan for land adjacent to the park, which could have potential impacts. The proposed USFS horse loading facilities could have an impact on the park.

\* Other private land ownership adjacent to the park could affect aesthetics in the area.

### **Beavertail Hill**

\* Subdivision of neighboring farm land could affect park aesthetics.

\* In recent years there has been severe bank erosion along the Clark Fork River adjacent to the campground. Park resources will be jeopardized if this process continues.

*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

\* Ownership of the old railroad grade that bisects the park has never been completely determined; the park could be negatively affected, depending on what happens to this property.

**Painted Rocks**

\* A dam failure or forest fire in the area would significantly affect the park.

**Anaconda Stack**

\* The structural stability of the stack is a concern. Some of the caps on the top of the stack have deteriorated, as have a number of metal bands. There are also safety issues concerning lighting on the stack and aircraft security.

\* Environmental hazards are a concern, and a major deterrent to opening the site to visitors.

**Granite Ghost Town**

\* Vandalism is a concern, as this is a remote site with no staff presence.

### **Region 3**

In addition to park-specific discussion of threats below, there are some general negative forces affecting state parks. Many of these threats are caused by the users themselves, and include such things as crowding, resource degradation from overuse, vandalism, interest groups with opposing values, and inappropriate activities. Parks are also threatened by a lack of vision and support by public officials at various levels. When used inappropriately, privatization of certain park functions might also be viewed as a potential threat to park resources; state parks should be run in a business-like manner, but they should not be operated in manner which gives primacy to profit-making at the expense of resource values.

Currently, the single most threatening land use activity in Region 3 is sub-division adjacent to parks. Site managers are spending increasing amounts of time dealing with people who have built houses next to state parks and fishing access sites. Mining and noxious weeds were also noted as other serious threats which threaten park resources in this region.

*V: The State Park System*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

On a site-by-site basis, specific threats facing Region 3 parks are as follows:

**Lewis and Clark Caverns**

- \* Overuse of the cave resource by visitors may be the most threatening activity at the caverns. It is possible that the carrying capacity for guided tours through the Caverns is currently being exceeded, with on-going, long-term detrimental impacts to the subterranean resources
- \* Mining activity on patented mineral claims along the Jefferson River and along the south side of the park is a threat to the integrity of the park, especially if these properties are developed with houses or other commercial activity. Presently, mining activity is most prominent on the Riverside Placer.
- \* Homesite development activities could potentially occur on all surrounding private properties and greatly impact both the ecosystem and aesthetic integrity of the park.
- \* Encroachment of various communications towers has already seriously impacted the viewshed in the park. Presently, two towers can be seen on the ridge to the east of the park from the upper visitor center parking lot. One approach to deal with this issue would be to work on securing conservation easements to protect the entire park viewshed, including the south side of the Jefferson River Canyon.
- \* Livestock in the Greer Gulch riparian zone could threaten the Caverns water supply. The Gulch--which lies on the northeast boundary of the park--is the watershed which is the source of the Caverns water supply. Presently, one of the springs which feeds the Gulch has been developed as a stock watering area. Ideally, the entire Greer Gulch drainage should be included in the park to protect both the water supply and wildlife habitat in the riparian zone.
- \* Wildfire.

**Bannack**

- \* Increasing visitation may be the biggest threat to the resources at Bannack. There continues to be incremental growth in attendance at Bannack Days, and the park may have exceeded its carrying capacity for the number of visitors the resources, parking, and staff can handle. This event can not be allowed to grow any larger without seriously jeopardizing resources.
- \* Vandalism by park users is at an all-time high and rising.



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- \* Homesite development on the extensive Towner property holdings, in the immediate vicinity of Bannack.
- \* Inappropriate mining activities continue to be a threat at Bannack, although acquisition of surrounding BLM properties has helped reduce this.
- \* Fire is a threat to Bannack virtually every day, but especially during drought-ridden summers.
- \* Flooding caused by rapid snow melt from the surrounding hillsides or from a swollen Grasshopper Creek has and will continue to threaten Bannack resources.

**Missouri Headwaters**

- \* This site is threatened by homesite development, periodic flooding, and subsequent erosion.
- \* The park's primitive park status restricts certain types of development which could make the site a more attractive one for visitors.

**Hauser Lake/Black Sandy**

- \* The primary threat to this park comes from overuse, caused by a lack of alternative access points on Hauser Lake.
- \* Vandalism is a significant threat.
- \* The narrow and winding county access road could present a threat to visitors in the event of a natural disaster such as a wildfire or earthquake.
- \* Wildfire and noxious weeds are lesser threats at Black Sandy.

**Spring Meadow Lake**

- \* The most serious threat, by far, is vandalism.
- \* Non-point source pollution could threaten water quality in the lake.

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**Elkhorn**

\* This park could be severely threatened by new mining activity adjacent to the community. Associated impacts such as increased population and traffic would present a multitude of challenges to FWP resources at this site. Greater traffic volumes (dump trucks, heavy equipment, etc.), in particular, could damage old buildings by generating vibrations. Any blasting associated with mining activity could also damage structures, as well as detract from visitor experiences.

\* Vandalism and wildfire.

**Parker Homestead**

\* The land ownership of this site could be considered a threat, as the state only has a 20 year lease.

\* The forces of nature threaten this site as they slowly deteriorate the wood in the homestead.

\* Homesite development.

\* Wildfire (from ditch burning) and vandalism are constant threats at this site, which has no staff presence.

**Madison Buffalo Jump**

\* This site could be potentially threatened by homesite development as the entire Madison River corridor becomes increasingly popular.

\* Wildfire

\* Vandalism.

\* Because of its archaeological resources, the park is threatened by relic and shard hunters.

\* Noxious weeds.

**Clarks Lookout and Beaverhead Rock**

- \* Homesite development.
- \* Vandalism.

**Region 4**

Development of inholdings and land adjacent to or near park boundaries is the most serious and widespread threat to state parks in Region 4, as discussed below:

**Giant Springs**

- \* Development on inholdings, and urban sprawl to the north and east of the park.
- \* Noxious weeds.
- \* Groundwater contamination, or reduction of volume of water coming out of the spring. Any utilization of water from the spring (e.g., for the hatchery, bottled water, etc.) must be done with great care.
- \* Overuse of the park during the Lewis and Clark bicentennial.
- \* Potential impacts to the spring from new fish hatchery water intake.

**Ackley Lake**

- \* Dewatering by the water-users association.
- \* Boundary intrusions--need boundary identification and secure fencing.

**Smith River**

- \* Cabin development.
- \* Noxious weeds.



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- \* Grazing and riparian management.
- \* Water quality and quantity.
- \* Overuse (one indicator in the last management plan is now over the standard).
- \* Logging and road construction on adjacent land.

**Ulm Pishkun**

- \* Off-trail use.
- \* On-going illicit digging for artifacts.
- \* Viewshed threats (a subdivision is planned in the vicinity).
- \* Vandalism.

**Sluice Boxes**

- \* Development on adjacent properties.
- \* Noxious weeds.
- \* Decay and destabilization of historic structures.
- \* Water quality (old mines upstream continue to leach contaminants).
- \* Increasing use.

**Region 5**

The most significant threats facing parks in this region are subdivision, crowding, and over use. Effective measures to limit and manage use have not yet been developed for many parks, and the Division lacks sufficient staff to adequately control sites.

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Threats identified for specific parks are listed below:

**Cooney**

\* Subdivision is the most serious threat at Cooney. Presently, two major subdivisions are being developed along the entire length of the north shore of the reservoir (one and a half miles in length), with another subdivision recently approved to the north of the first two. The south shore of Cooney has two new subdivisions as well. In addition, there is a 15 unit trailer court adjoining state property.

The impact of these subdivisions goes beyond aesthetics. Some of the residents of the adjoining properties tend to view the park as part of their back yard, leading to maintenance problems, law enforcement conflicts, an increase in vandalism, theft of services (e.g., using park dumpsters for household garbage) and fee revenue losses.

\* Crowding and recreational conflicts are two other serious issues and Cooney. In particular, there have been growing conflicts between jet skiers and other types of recreationalists.

\* Flooding has damaged sites during high water years.

**Pictograph Cave**

\* As of 1997, the legality of the access road to the park was unclear. This could threaten access to the park over the long-term.

\* The neighboring ranch is one of the most desirable undeveloped parcel of land anywhere near Billings. Because the current owners do not want to continue ranching, there is a possibility the property could be subdivided, with potential adverse impacts on the park..

\* The pictographs in the cave are encrusted with deposits of gypsum and dolomite, and the sandstone they are painted on is crumbling and falling at a rapid rate.

\* Vandalism is also a threat to the pictographs.

\* Visitor safety could be improved by changing alignment of interpretive trail.

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**Chief Plenty Coups**

- \* Unplanned or unregulated housing development.
- \* Groundwater contamination from poorly-planned development.
- \* Commercial or municipal buildings adjacent to park ( a health clinic is probable, with a casino possible).
- \* Dust and other impacts threaten the museum collections, which are inadequately protected..
- \* Mining impacts to cultural locations close to the park.

**Region 7**

Development, mining activity, increasing commercial use, and vandalism are some of the most significant threats to parks in Region 7.

**Makoshika**

- \* Oil and gas exploration and development inside the park and adjacent to it, with potential aesthetic and other impacts.
- \* Continued interest in dinosaurs--particularly from private collectors--may result in theft of park resources. The problem will be exacerbated if the price of fossils continues to climb.
- \* Urban sprawl along the western and southern boundaries of the park, as well as along the entrance road, will distract from the quality of visitor experience, and increase unregulated use of the park adjacent to the new developments.
- \* There is increasing pressure from various interests (e.g., mountain bikers, equestrians, hikers, etc.) for additional opportunities in the park. These interests will have to be balanced against resource protection needs and the potential for recreational conflicts.
- \* Increased commercial pressure.
- \* Continued use of the existing rifle range could affect the safety and comfort level of park visitors.



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**Tongue River Reservoir**

- \* Proposed subdivision of private land along the northern portion of the reservoir, on both the east and west shores.
- \* Low and fluctuating reservoir levels due to various water compacts. Park facilities may be a great distance from the water by mid-summer, even in wet years.
- \* Coal development.

**Rosebud Battlefield**

- \* Lack of management plan and/or development plan may compromise Division's ability to respond effectively to public and commercial demands.
- \* The "107th Meridian Settlement" (between the U.S. Government and the Crow Tribe) extended the Crow Reservation boundary onto Rosebud Battlefield. Though FWP retained surface ownership, the federally-owned mineral rights reverted to the Crow Tribe. There are two possible impacts to the park: coal development within park boundaries, and the related issue of Crow jurisdiction over a portion of the park. Coal development is also possible on adjacent properties.
- \* Increased commercial pressure. One aspect of this is that remaining family ranches in the area may diversify their income strategy by incorporating recreational offerings in their businesses. This could lead to greater pressure for various types of commercial activity in the park.
- \* Neighboring ranches selling to absentee landowners may change attitudes about the park. One consequence may be demands for a more diverse range of facilities and opportunities than have been provided here to date. Ultimately, this could be an opportunity or a problem, depending on how it plays out.
- \* Vandalism and illegal collection of artifacts.
- \* Several major battle sites are not within the park boundary; these could be plowed under, built on, or otherwise disturbed by future landowners.

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2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

**Medicine Rocks**

- \* On-going (and possibly increasing) vandalism threaten the most significant features of the park.
- \* The park will be affected by significant changes in landowners and/or landowner attitudes, as discussed under Rosebud Battlefield. Possible results could be subdivision, increased commercial pressure, and demands for different kinds of services.
- \* Lack of staffing to manage and protect site.

**Pirogue Island**

- \* Subdivision
- \* Vandalism and “party” activity.

**Hell Creek**

- \* This site has experienced significant annual increases in visitation each of the last three years, a trend which is expected to continue, particularly with publicity of the excellent fishing in Fort Peck Reservoir. Existing facilities can not adequately accommodate current peak use. In addition, it is uncertain whether the site contains enough suitable topography to construct the facilities needed to meet current (let alone future) demands.
- \* Growth in visitation has also increased the demand for concession services. The existing concession facilities are unable to accommodate this increasing demand. Opportunity for facility expansion in the existing concession area is severely limited due to topography. Concession operators are already talking of expansion beyond their permitted area. Such expansion has the potential to consume limited land base that may be needed to accommodate other park facilities desired by visitors.
- \* Above and beyond the work of the concessionaire discussed above, increased commercial use of the park is expected, leading to greater demands on park resources. Some of the types of uses include fishing and hunting outfitters/guides, birding tours, archaeological and geological groups, etc.

## **Potential Park System Gaps, Acquisition Priorities and Management Changes**

This section includes a number of different perspectives on the state park system--taken region by region--as follows:

- \* Priority inholdings or land adjacent to existing parks which should be purchased in fee or retained under some type of easement.
- \* Specific sites with potential to become state parks. These should be regarded as a menu of options, which have not been rigorously prioritized and are not proposals at this time.
- \* Potential new types or categories of park sites (e.g., historic ranch), or geographical areas where a new park might be appropriate (e.g., Missouri Breaks, lower Yellowstone River, etc.). Again, these should be regarded as ideas to stimulate discussion rather than actual proposals.
- \* Fishing access sites which might more appropriately be managed as state parks, or vice versa. In addition, any sites which do not meet state park criteria, and might more appropriately be managed by another agency.

Some general types of parks which may transcend regional boundaries include linear parks developed along rivers or trails. Many states include trail corridors--particularly rail trail corridors--as very successful and popular components of their state park system. In addition, there may be long-term potential for managing certain river corridors as part of the state park system. This wouldn't necessarily entail a significant amount of property in state ownership; rather, these may be parks defined more in terms of recreational management, as well as carefully selected series of sites for access and possibly overnight camping. Another linear park idea involves preserving and interpreting discrete sites along a historic trail not already under some type of management (e.g., Bozeman Trail, Mullan Trail, etc.).

Other types of parks which might make good candidates for adding to the park system include the following: preserve and interpret a historic stagecoach stop; work with the private sector to preserve and interpret a historic railroad-related site; add additional Lewis and Clark interpretive sites; develop a park interpreting the history of logging in Montana; and/or acquire an historic/traditional farm or ranch site, preferably in the eastern half of the state.



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The northeastern portion of Montana encompassed by Region 6 is without state parks, and should be considered as a high priority for future additions. "Island" mountain ranges (e.g., the Crazies, the Big Snowies, the Highwoods, etc.) are a physical feature not represented in the current park system, which also lacks a high elevation park.

Information from the 1996 State Park Users Survey indicate there is support for a larger park system among both resident and non-resident visitors, with little backing for reducing the size of the system. According to one question on the survey, 87 percent of Montana park visitors preferred a state park system that was either about the same size as currently or larger, while fewer than 4 percent wanted a smaller system (see table V-2).

**TABLE V-2**

**ATTITUDES ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE MONTANA STATE PARK  
SYSTEM  
(onsite survey)**

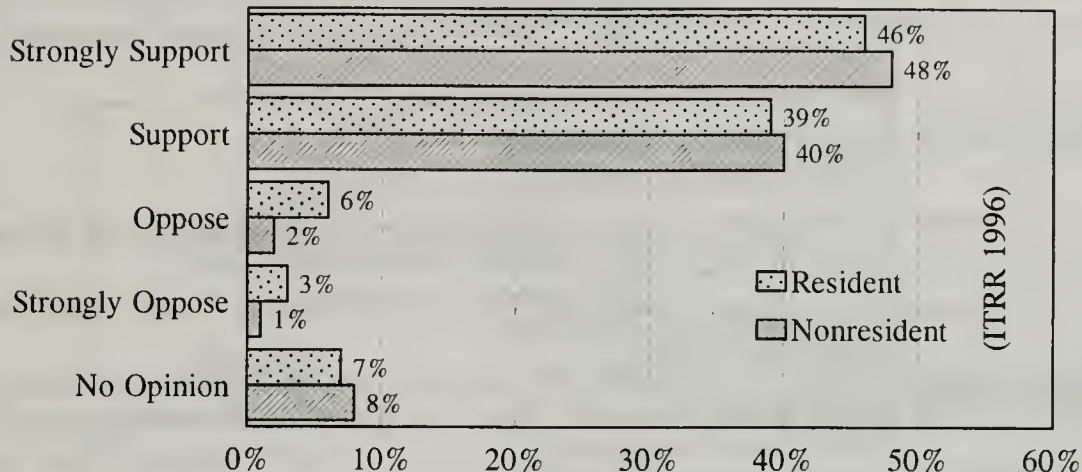
	<u>% Residents</u>	<u>% Non-Resident</u>
Desire More State Parks	51.1%	41.0%
Prefer About the Same Number	35.8%	22.9%
Fewer State Parks	3.4%	1.0%
No Opinion	9.7%	35.1%
<hr/>		
Total	100%	100%

*Source: ITRR 1996*

When park visitors were asked a different version of the question, 85 percent of resident visitors said they supported adding more state parks, with only 9 percent opposed; non-residents were even more supportive of a larger system (see figure V-5).

Translating public support into political backing is necessary for expansion to occur. Additionally, it is important that there be adequate funding and staff provided to develop and maintain any additional sites. A long-term goal would be to establish a dedicated funding source to insure that the state park system is able to expand to meet the demands of a growing Montana population, as well as the needs of the 8 million annual non-resident visitors.

**FIGURE V-5**  
**ATTITUDES ON ADDING NEW PARKS**  
(onsite survey)

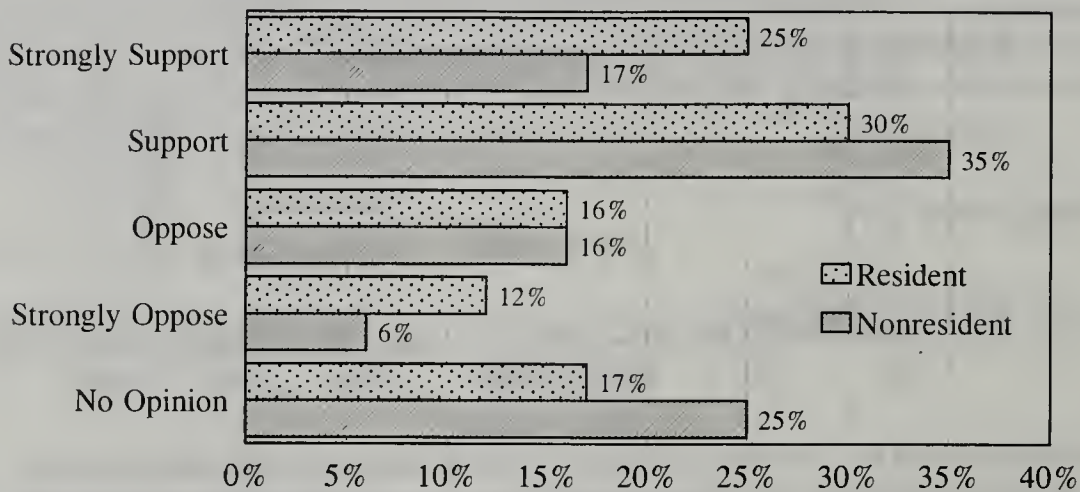


Securing inholdings and key properties adjacent to existing state parks will continue to be the highest land acquisition priority for Montana State Parks, although the addition of new sites to the system is expected during the life of this plan. While the list of specific properties and types of sites included in this section is a long one, outstanding opportunities sometimes are unanticipated and arise quickly, requiring a flexible and proactive approach to capitalize on, both among Parks Program staff and political decision makers. According to the 1996 State Onsite Park User Survey, the majority of park visitors support the concept of purchasing inholdings and securing buffer zones (see figures V-6 and V-7).

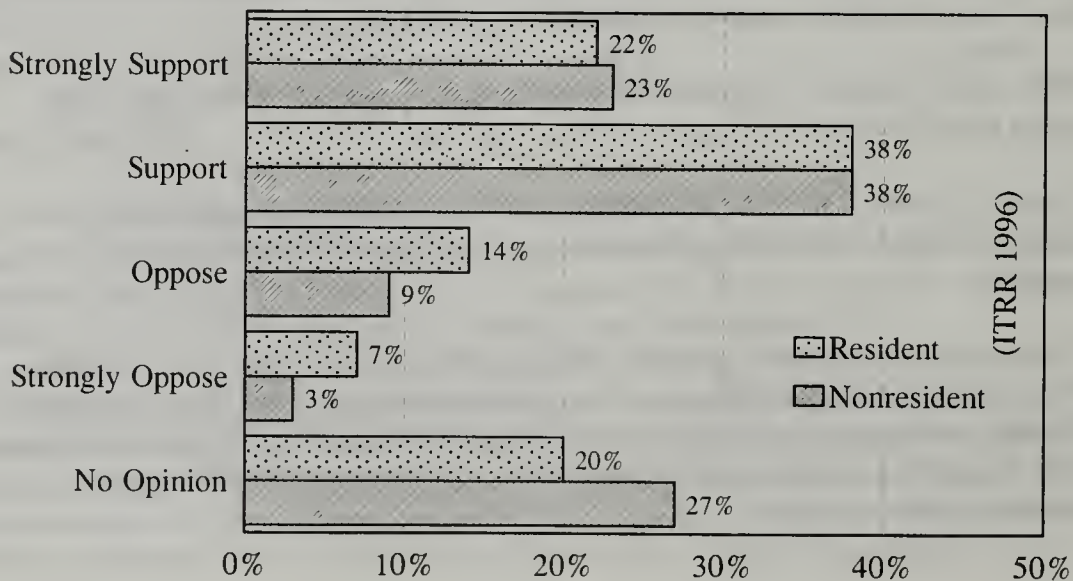
Criteria which could be useful in helping to evaluate potential additions to the State Park System include the following:

- \* The site contains a resource of national, regional, or state-wide significance, or a locally-significant resource for which there are no other willing or appropriate managers.
- \* The capacity to adequately maintain and appropriately develop the site is available, either through the Parks Program or in cooperation with other managers. Similarly, sufficient staff must be available to adequately manage the site. The addition of parks which threaten the integrity of the system by severely straining Parks Program resources should be avoided.

**FIGURE V-6**  
**ATTITUDES ON ACQUIRING INHOLDINGS**  
**WITHIN STATE PARKS**  
**(onsite survey)**



**FIGURE V-7**  
**ATTITUDES ON INCREASING BUFFER AREAS AROUND PARKS**  
**(onsite survey)**





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- \* There is public and political support for acquiring and managing the site as part of the Montana State Parks System.

It should be emphasized that the majority of the following sites are not proposals; rather, they are a long and diverse list of ideas to stimulate public and agency discussion.

## **Region 1**

### **Potential New Parks**

- \* Additional property is needed around Flathead Lake.
- \* Consideration needs to be given to a state-wide bond issue or national initiative to purchase the land Plum Creek timber is selling. Ideally, these purchases would be done on a large scale, rather than acre by acre.
- \* Easements or deeded trails are needed to connect existing sites, or potential future sites. In addition to land-based trails, strings of water-based campsites could be developed for canoeing and kayaking at sites such as Flathead Lake and the Thompson Chain of Lakes.
- \* Kootenai Falls.
- \* Elmo on Flathead Lake. This site was previously operated as a state park under lease from (what was then) the Department of State Lands. FWP lost the lease in the mid-1990s to a higher bidder.

### **Priority Inholdings/Adjacent Sites**

- \* Property is needed next to West Shore, as the boat launching facilities are inadequate for current needs.
- \* Lone Pine is threatened with subdivision. There are three properties currently for sale at the entrance that should be purchased to protect the integrity of the park (e.g., the archery range), preserve palouse prairie, and conserve aesthetics.
- \* Private lots on Wild Horse Island should be purchased, as they become available, to preserve the integrity of the island.

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**Potential Changes in Management**

According to Region 1 staff, all parks currently in the system should be retained. Over the long-term, Thompson Chain of Lakes--currently classified as a fishing access site--has potential to become a primitive state park (it was originally intended to be a state park). Finally, it would be advantageous to permanently secure State Land lease sites.

**Region 2**

**Potential New Parks**

- \* Alberton Gorge, on the Clark Fork River.
- \* Daly Mansion, north of Hamilton.
- \* Potomac Logging Camp, east of Potomac.
- \* Gold Creek Gold Dredge, east of Drummond. (The gold dredge at this site is essentially still intact.)
- \* Old Milwaukee Railroad grade, between Missoula and the Idaho border (some of this has been preserved already).
- \* Park interpreting the Ice Age Flood which created Lake Missoula.

**Priority Inholdings/Adjacent Sites**

- \* Lost Creek--Astoria Placer claim.
- \* Fort Owen--ranch land adjacent to the park.
- \* Beavertail Hill--ownership of old railroad grade in the park needs to be clarified and, if necessary, secured to ensure compatibility with the rest of the park.

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*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Potential Changes in Management**

- \* The Anaconda Stack might be more appropriately managed by the City of Anaconda, or some other local entity.
- \* There have been discussions about trading Council Grove to the Forest Service (which manages land adjacent to the site), in exchange for property in the Alberton Gorge.
- \* Johnsrud FAS and/or the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor should be designated a state park.
- \* Beavertail Hill FAS should become part of Beavertail Hill State Park, given it is in the immediate vicinity, and most recreation is non-fishing oriented.
- \* Chief Looking Glass FAS might be more appropriately managed as a state park. The site serves a variety of different recreationists, and is developed to a higher level than most FAS units.
- \* Harpers Lake FAS has potential as a primitive state park, for the same reasons as stated for Chief Looking Glass.

**Region 3**

**Potential New Parks**

- \* Virginia City/Nevada City.
- \* Hauser Lake/White Sandy.
- \* Hauser Lake/Spokane Bay (McMaster's property).
- \* Robber's Roost (between Alder and Sheridan).
- \* Various stage stations around the region.
- \* Stedman Foundry, adjacent to Spring Meadow State Park.
- \* Mule Ranch Area, Mount Haggin.
- \* Cooperative venture to help preserve the OTO Ranch, Paradise Valley.



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*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Priority Inholdings/Adjacent Sites**

- \* Missouri Headwaters--Frank Hart property.
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns--Riverside Placer.
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns--Altamont Limestone Placer.
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns--Bushilla property.
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns--Dawson property park entrance road right-of-way.
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns--Motherell Placer.
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns--Molenda property.
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns--KG Ranch/Greer Gulch watershed property.
- \* Lewis and Clark Caverns--LaHood Park Hotel and CCC camp location.
- \* Bannack--Towner property.

**Potential Changes in Management**

- \* After Limespur FAS is developed, it should be incorporated into Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park.
- \* East Gallatin Park (an affiliated land currently managed by Bozeman) could be turned over in fee to the City. By transferring ownership, FWP would no longer have to be involved in environmental assessments, management plans, land issues, and other matters which arguably should be the responsibility of the managing agency. There are similar instances in other parts of the state where this type of change might be appropriate.
- \* Park Lake FAS has been discussed in a potential land trade with the Forest Service for more than nine years. In the interim, the department has not maintained the site and it has suffered significant resource damage and weed infestation due to unregulated camping, pioneering of new roads, and off-road vehicle use. Should the decision be made to retain ownership of this FAS, it could be developed into a park site in concert with the extensive development the Forest Service has already put into the campground they manage on the lake.

*V: The State Park System*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

- \* If it could be demonstrated that they were of state-wide or regional significance, consideration could be given to converting Dailey Lake and/or Harrison Lake to state park status. Greycliff, Deepdale, and York Bridge FASs also have some characteristics which might make them suitable for state park status; use at the latter site will be influenced by the impending purchase and development of Devil's Elbow on Hauser Lake.
- \* No existing state parks in this region should be transferred to other management status.

## **Region 4**

### **Potential New Parks**

- \* Castle Ghost Town (in the Castle Mountains, southeast of White Sulphur Springs).
- \* Site(s) in the Rocky Mountain Front region.
- \* Possible sites in Missouri River corridor.

### **Priority Inholdings/Adjacent Sites**

- \* Giant Springs--land owned by the Montana Power Company, all the way to Morony Dam (conservation easement preferred).
- \* Giant Springs--Brown property (source of Giant Springs).
- \* Ulm Pishkun--Adjacent lands owned by Ted Turner and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.
- \* Ulm Pishkun--Eustance land near upper entrance (seven-acre triangular parcel).
- \* Sluice Boxes--Washington/Camp Don Bosco.
- \* Sluice Boxes--Turkey Mountain Claim.
- \* Smith River--Continue working with other agencies, non-profit organizations, and private landowners to preserve the scenic and environmental integrity of the corridor through the purchase conservation easements and other means.

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**Potential Changes in Management**

- \* Region 4 staff recommend retaining within the Department all parkland currently managed by the Division. However, Ackley Lake should be considered for reclassification as a FAS unit.
- \* The long-term potential exists for the USFS-run Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center to be managed as part of Giant Springs/Heritage State Park.

**Region 5**

**Potential New Sites**

- \* Look at acquiring additional sites along the Yellowstone River. In general, there are insufficient camping sites in the Billings area.
- \* Establish a linear Bozeman Trail State Park, with possible acquisition of selected sites along the route. Military forts such as Fort Keough, Fort Smith, and Fort Ellis, could make potential park sites.
- \* Look at adding a fur trading post (e.g., Fort Manual Lisa, Fort Peck, etc.).
- \* Add sites on Lewis and Clark Historic Trail.
- \* Establish a Sioux "Indian Wars Trail" with Region 7 and adjacent states.

**Priority Inholdings/Adjacent Sites**

- \* Cooney--There are two inholdings along the south shore of the reservoir which are a high priority for future acquisition. The Egenes property at Marshall Cove is completely surrounded by state land. The second parcel is located at Cottonwood Campground and is bordered on three sides by state land.
- \* Pictograph Cave--Purchase conservation easement on the adjacent Kuhlman ranch.
- \* Plenty Coups--Purchase original Plenty Coups property. There may be potential for purchasing property near the museum which could become a housing development.



### **Potential Changes in Management**

- \* There is long-term potential for increased cooperative management of Chief Plenty Coups State Park with the Crow tribe.
- \* Over the long-term, increased involvement of the city and/or county with management at Lake Elmo could be positive.
- \* There is long-term potential for adding Pompey's Pillar to the State Park system (although it is currently protected by the BLM).

## **Regions 6 and 7**

Regions 6 and 7 will be discussed together in this section. Currently, there are no state parks in Region 6, and it is a priority for the Division to eventually have state park representation in the vast portion of northeastern Montana covered by this region.

### **Potential New Sites**

- \* Add a park in Region 6 and/or 7 with large expanses of diverse riparian and upland habitat types for the preservation and interpretation of plant and wildlife species which inhabit these areas. Ideally, there would be opportunities to interpret the positive and negative influence of humans on the park environment through time. There may be opportunities to cooperate with the FWP Wildlife Division and/or non-profit conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy.
- \* Explore opportunities to add historical parks that preserve and interpret the homestead era, early ranch/cattle drives, or steamboats on the Missouri River.
- \* The Fort Peck Dam and townsite are of national historic importance, and most of the historical research and documentation are complete or well underway.
- \* There may be additional potential to interpret 19th century immigrant trails in these regions.
- \* The Little Rockies and the Bears Paw Mountain ranges could provide opportunities for adding a park in Region 6, and the only park in one of Montana's "island" mountain ranges. One advantage of the Bears Paws over the Little Rockies would be greater proximity to Havre and Highway 2, and less impacts from mining. It is not known at this point whether suitable property is available in these areas.

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*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* Look at adding a water-based recreation park. (Fresno or Nelson Reservoirs might be possible candidates, particularly if they could be shown to have more than just local appeal. Nelson Reservoir was a state park at one time).

**Priority Inholdings/Adjacent Sites**

- \* Purchase mineral rights under all state parks in Region 7, with an emphasis on Makoshika and Rosebud Battlefield.
- \* Makoshika--Purchase section 17, T15N, R56E.
- \* Rosebud Battlefield--Acquire more of the battlefield, Royals Ridge, and Andrews point.
- \* Medicine Rocks--Purchase SW1/4, SE1/4, Sec. 1, T3N, R58E. This is a parcel between the southeastern park boundary and highway. This property--which currently has a trailer house on it--may be for sale in the future.
- \* Pirogue Island--Over the long term, it may be prudent to purchase adjacent private property between state lands to the west and east of the park.
- \* Tongue River Reservoir--Over the long-term, consideration should be given to purchasing conservation easements on private property along the western shoreline.

**Potential Changes in Management**

- \* Regional staff suggest retaining all current state parks. No fishing access sites were identified for future conversion to state parks in this region.

## VI

# NATIONAL AND STATE-WIDE TRENDS AFFECTING MONTANA STATE PARKS

Montana's State Parks are immersed in a constantly changing state-wide, regional, national, and international environment. This section will examine some of the trends and attitudes likely to affect Montana State Parks and outdoor recreation in the early twenty-first century, starting from a nation-wide perspective and ending with what is occurring in Montana. The trends listed below are necessarily highly selective (and sometimes seemingly contradictory), and don't include everything which could potentially have an impact on the park system.

### National Trends

There are a number of nation-wide trends which have potential implications for outdoor recreation, use of leisure time, and utilization of parks. One researcher has identified five trends he feels may have significant impacts on future recreation in the United States (Lime 1996). These national trends--which are listed below and discussed in more detail later in this section--are expected to play a role in shaping future outdoor recreation in Montana, and in turn affect Montana State Parks:

- 1) Increased demand for recreation, especially close-to-home and near urban centers.*
- 2) Increasingly experienced and knowledgeable recreationists.*
- 3) Increasing proportions of older Americans.*
- 4) Increased recreation demands by women, ethnic minorities, and the disabled.  
(Conversely, participation has decreased among low-income groups.)*
- 5) Growth in new recreation-related technology and businesses, with more opportunities demanding people's time.*

Based on the trends and implications he identified, Lime has suggested a number of possible ways of addressing the issues raised, which are listed below:

- 1) Improve the rapport and dialogue with the diverse segments of the public who use recreation facilities. Improve customer service and resource decision-making.*
- 2) Increase hiring of ethnic minorities and older Americans.*
- 3) Increase training of all staff to meet the needs of increasingly diverse customers.*
- 4) Increase partnerships with businesses, organizations, and volunteers.*
- 5) Increase monitoring and research to improve decision-making.*
- 6) Explore more regional planning and management strategies.*



*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The trends discussed above will have varying effects in different parts of the country, or they may ultimately play out differently than anticipated. In spite of their general character and inherent uncertainty, however, they are worth considering within the context of the long-term future of the Montana State Park System. The following sections discuss in more detail each of the trends listed above, the factors that created them, as well as the repercussions on future use and management of Montana State Parks.

**1) Increased demand for recreation, especially close-to-home and near urban centers**

Participation in many types of activities is increasing, and this growth is expected to continue into the early twenty-first century. As the country becomes increasingly urbanized, providing abundant opportunities in and near the places most Americans reside and work will become increasingly important. Other factors Lime associates with these trends include the following:

- \* Time has become a more limiting factor than money for many recreationists.*
- \* More working mothers with children.*
- \* More single-parent families.*
- \* More home-based employment, part-time work, and flexible hours.*
- \* More interest in physical fitness and exercise.*
- \* More short vacations (75% of all overnight vacation trips are 3 days or less).*
- \* More interest in recreation and leisure for mental and physical health.*

**Summary of Implications**

- \* Increased focus on short blocks of free time.*
- \* Growth in spontaneous outings of short duration and recreation during the off-seasons, driven in part by more flexible work schedules and a desire to avoid crowding. Conversely, there may also be more planned and deliberate outings of both long and short duration.*

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

*\* Continuing demand for fishing opportunities, and decline in demand for some types of hunting. More demand for wildlife viewing.*

*\* Growing interest in mixing socializing and recreation (e.g., meeting and traveling with out-of-state relatives or friends as part of a vacation).*

*\* Increased competition for resources and potential conflicts (Lime 1996).*

## **Discussion**

Examining national participation trends for specific outdoor recreation activities reveals patterns that are helpful in understanding Montana's present and future recreational patterns. Walking and picnicking, for example, are two outdoor activities popular in state parks which have national participation rates of more than 20 percent (see figure VI-1). Other activities such as visiting cultural sites, various types of camping, hunting, outdoor photography, and wildlife viewing, have participation rates which range between five and twelve percent of the population (Cordell, Teasley, and Super 1997)

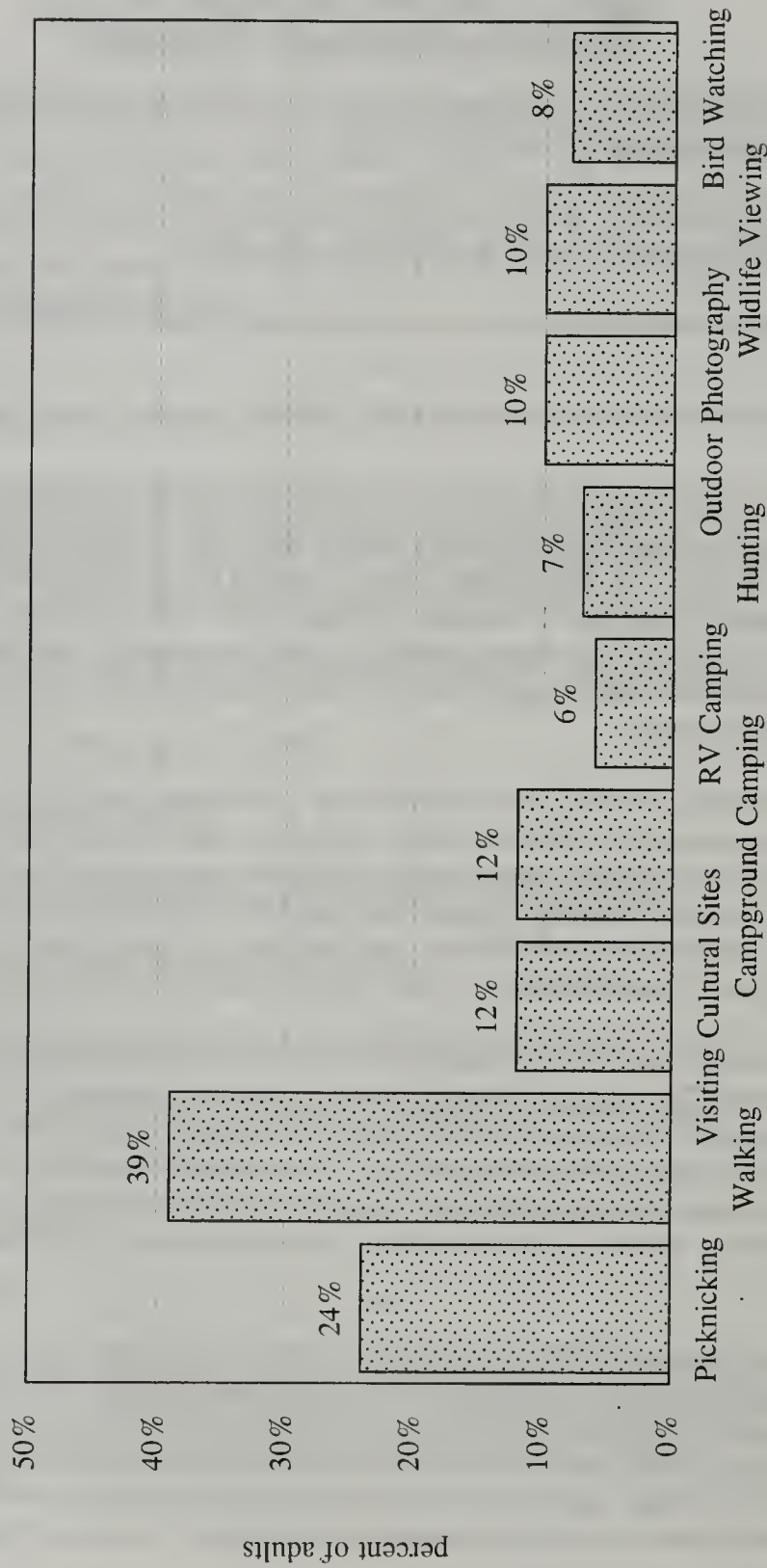
Viewing and studying activities were engaged in by 153 million Americans over age fifteen in 1996. These pursuits--which include visiting nature and visitor centers, stopping at historic and cultural sites, wildlife viewing, nature study, and sightseeing in general--are increasingly popular activities. Bird watching, in particular, grew by 155 percent from 1982-83 to 1995-96, gaining over 33 million more participants. Bird watching is a good example of a recreation activity which can be pursued closed to home, often as close as one's back yard.

Between the year 2000 and 2040, a number of outdoor activities are expected to experience significant growth: Day hiking, developed camping, primitive camping, wildlife watching, and outdoor photography, for example, are all expected to experience growth rates of between 50 and 200 percent during this period (see figure VI-2). The substantial increases in these activities--as well as others--more than offset participant losses for consumptive outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing, which have been occurring in many places across the country (Widdekind 1995).

Time constraints--along with financial limitations--have helped create a growing demand for recreational opportunities close to home. There is a wide-spread perception among Americans that they have less leisure time, due in part to longer work week for some people, and a dramatic increase in households where both spouses work (a jump from 45% in 1980 to an estimated 85% in 2000). Lack of time is the most often cited reason for not participating more in recreation, with 56% of Americans reporting time as the key limitation (Roper Starch

**FIGURE VI-1**

**OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION RATES FOR ADULT AMERICANS, 1996**

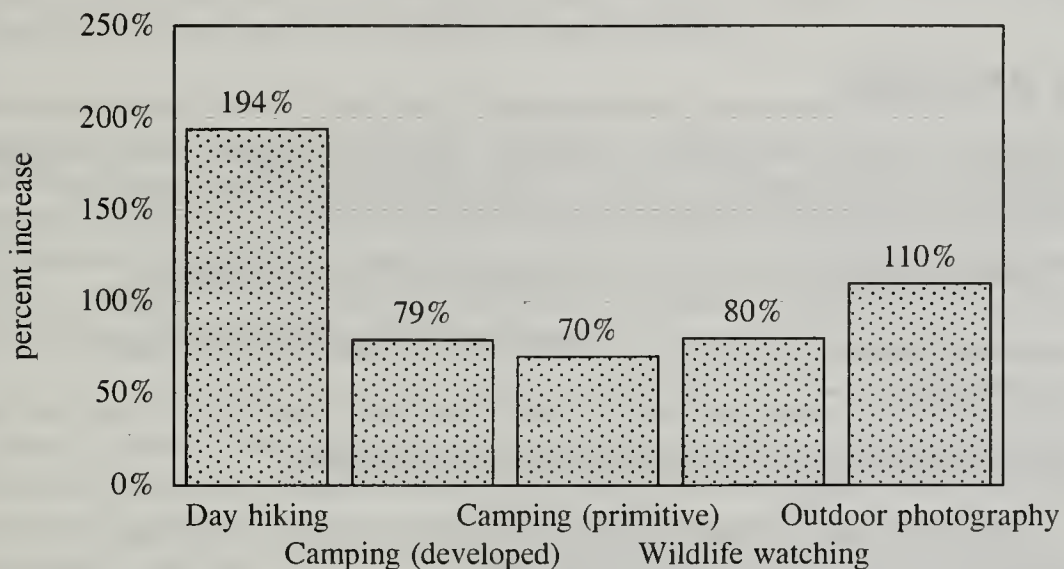


(Cordell, Teasley, and Super 1997)



**FIGURE VI-2**

**PROJECTED GROWTH IN PARTICIPATION FOR SELECTED  
OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES, 2000-2040 (U.S.)**



(Widdekind 1995)

Worldwide 1996). While many Americans actually have less leisure time than they enjoyed twenty years ago, others merely believe this to be true because they have more recreation options, and are pulled in increasingly more directions during their free time (e.g., Internet surfing, health clubs, cable television, videos, etc.).

Between 1986 and 1996, the number of weekend trips taken by Americans jumped by 70 percent, accounting for more than half of all U.S. travel. During the same period, non-weekend travel rose by only 15% (Travel Industry Association of America 1998). In the harried, fractured environment in which many Americans live, short recreational excursions become more important, and outstanding opportunities close to where most people live are at a premium. It is increasingly recognized that outdoor recreation provides significant benefits to individuals, families, and communities, including health, fitness, and education (Canadian Parks/Recreation Association 1997, National Association of State Park Directors 1997).

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**2) Increasingly experienced and knowledgeable recreationists**

There are many more types of recreation opportunities and equipment available today than ever before, along with a dramatic increase in the type and quantity of recreation-related information.

**Summary of Implications**

- \* Increased demand for “quality” experiences, including “adventure” travel, historical and cultural opportunities, and environmentally oriented trips (“eco-tourism”).*
- \* Growing competition for resources, increasing the potential for conflict.*
- \* Increased demand for information, and growing marketing and publicity of opportunities.*
- \* Increased challenges to resource planning and management.*
- \* Growing recreation expertise among participants, and increased numbers of volunteers and program advocates (Lime 1996).*

**Discussion**

There has been an increased emphasis on the technical aspects of recreation. The outdoor recreation market has been broken into a multitude of specialized segments, many with their own magazines, clubs, and political agendas. Often, outdoor recreation enthusiasts present less of a united front than a series of separate tribes jostling each other for better position.

Since 1994 there has been a significant increase in some activities by the most active recreationists, while other rapidly growing activities are experiencing significant increases among the participants who engage in the activity only a few times a year. Primitive camping and hiking, for example, are activities where the percent of participants who enjoy the activity more than ten days a year has increased, resulting in a growing number of experienced and knowledgeable recreationists. Conversely, bird watching and nature viewing have grown mainly because there has been a huge increase in the percent of participants who only engage in the activity one or two days a year.

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Advances in communication and travel technologies, as well as the growing sophistication of marketing and special interest groups that provide information to enthusiasts, are contributing to the knowledge base of recreationists. There is more information available about various recreation specialties and locations, and more of it is available almost instantaneously on the Internet. The percentage of travelers who used online services and/or the Internet for travel plans or reservations leaped from 11% in 1996 to 28% in 1997, when 6 million travelers booked trips on-line in 1997 (Travel Industry Association of America 1998).

The most active participants in outdoor recreation--generally the more affluent-- are increasingly seeking out locales which provide quality experiences. According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), one-half of all U.S. adults (74 million people) have taken an "adventure travel" trip in the past five years, engaging in activities ranging from whitewater rafting to scuba diving (1998). Remote rivers which saw little boat traffic two decades ago now see a steady stream of outfitted trips, not only in the West, but in other parts of the country as well as abroad. In a nine to five world, adventure sells.

Trips focusing on natural and cultural history have also become popular, both for domestic trips and excursions abroad. Many travelers who can afford it are willing to pay a premium not only to experience pristine environments, but to learn about them from experts. The Travel Industry of America (TIA) reports that 83 percent of American travelers are inclined to support environmentally-oriented travel companies, and are willing to spend an average of 6.2 percent more on trips and products by these suppliers (1998). Similarly, cultural and historic tourism has become one of the most popular segments of the travel industry, with nearly 54 million adult Americans reporting at least one visit to a museum or historic site in the past year. Travelers with strong cultural and historical interests tend to spend more money and visit more destinations (including national and state parks) than the typical vacationer (1998).

Although the average working American gets only 10 vacation days a year (compared to 22 days for Western Europeans), Americans--particularly affluent Americans--manage their "pleasure time very much the way a businessman would manage a business" (The Economist 1997). The pursuit of quality experiences by the most active and affluent vacationers and second home buyers is having a significant affect on Montana, fueled in part by media attention to rich and famous migrants, as well as the growing popularity of fly-fishing, snowboarding, and other outdoor recreation activities.



### **3) Increased proportions of older Americans**

The impact of a huge number of Baby Boomers starting families, moving through their middle years, and then retiring is having a profound impact on many aspects of American life, including outdoor recreation.

#### **Summary of Implications**

- \* Disproportionate growth of families recreating.*
- \* Surge in purchases of recreational equipment and services (older Americans tend to have more purchasing power).*
- \* Intensified pressure on high-amenity resources, particularly close to urban areas, as Baby Boomers look for retirement sites.*
- \* Healthier and more physically active older people than in the past, who will recreate longer. Conversely, the growing number of older people will also result in more recreationists who are not in good physical condition.*
- \* Increased interest in interpretation programs, guided tours, exhibits, cultural/historic sites, and other educational programs and vacations.*
- \* Increased concern as the population grows older about parking availability, security and enforcement, access, and information.*
- \* Increased interest in and ability to visit areas during non-traditional use seasons.*
- \* More demand for relatively less active recreation pursuits (e.g., golf, walking paths, gardening, etc.)*
- \* Smaller proportion of users available to pay for using certain types of resources (e.g., those typically used by the young).*
- \* Growing source of knowledgeable expertise, volunteers, and program advocates.*
- \* More middle-aged recreationists whose recreation patterns may be influenced by the need to care for elderly parents (Lime 1996).*

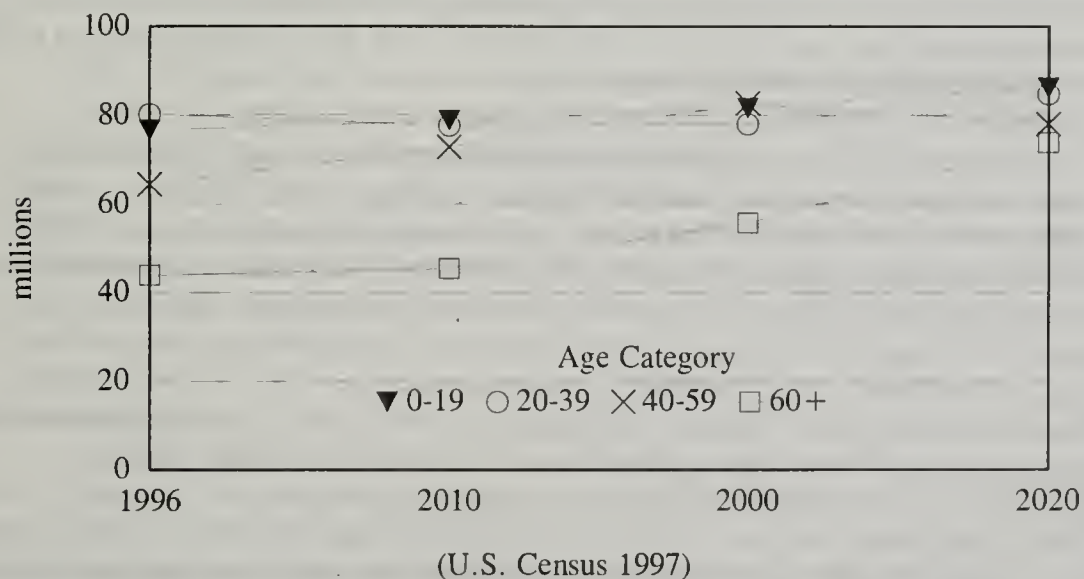
*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

### Explanation

As Baby Boomers have married and started families, the importance of family travel and vacations has increased. According to the TIA, the share of vacationers who travel with children increased from 45 % in 1992 to 55 % in 1996, and 87 % of American families with children took their kids with them on their most recent vacation. Overall, vacation locations preferred by American families include oceans/beaches, cities, and historic sites, the latter being of particular importance to Montana (TIA 1998).

Aging Baby Boomers will play an important role in outdoor recreation as their numbers increase dramatically into the twenty-first century (see figure VI-3). In 1995 Americans over 50 numbered more than 64 million. This group had a combined income of more than \$800 billion; they controlled 51 % of the discretionary income in the country, and accounted for 40 % of consumer demand (Recreation Executive Report 1996). This group is expected to grow from 50 million families in 1997 to 70 million by 2005, making this segment of the population the fastest growing consumer group in the country (Gladwell 1995).

**FIGURE VI-3**  
**AGING OF AMERICA: 1996-2020**



Potential major impacts of this demographic trend include an increase in recreational vehicle (RV) camping and growing participation in outdoor activities such as nature and wildlife viewing, and visiting cultural and historical sites. Older Americans tend to be interested in a

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

range of educational activities in conjunction with recreation, and a portion of this will occur within the context of group tours. Because retired people have much more freedom to come and go as they please, without the schedule constraints of kids or jobs, shoulder and off-season use of recreation sites should increase. While older Americans are healthier than ever, they have needs which are different than the younger segments of the population, and the need for accessible facilities, just to name one example, is going to increase in the twenty-first century.

Due in part to the aging American population, the recent growth in RV sales and use is likely the beginning of an extended trend, if fuel prices and other factors remain favorable. Owners of the more expensive motor homes, conversion vehicles, and trailers are generally over 50, and this group travels frequently, takes longer trips, and tends to spend more than other segments of the population. (Recreation Executive Report 1996). This older group, with generally larger RVs, often desire more developed facilities.

RVs--which range from folding camper trailers to fifth wheel trailers and motor coaches--are owned by one in ten American households, with ownership increasing from 7.3 million in 1984 to 8.2 million in 1994, and over 9 million units in 1996. Although retail sales of RVs fluctuated from 1990 to 1995, sales during the last two years were the highest since the 1970s. RV ownership has increased by about 100,000 a year since the mid 1980s and is forecast to grow by 135,000 annually for the next fifteen years. Retail sales of RVs reached a record \$12.4 billion in 1996, 50% higher than 1990, with 466,000 new RVs cruising the highways. Sales of top-line motor coaches, most of which cost over \$100,000, increased from 2,900 in 1991 to 3,900 in 1995. The rental market has increased even more drastically, with six years of growth, and a 29% increase in rentals expected for 1997 (Luscombe 1997).

Renting or buying an RV is increasingly seen as an economical way for many families to travel and vacation. By far the favorite activity for RV owners is camping, with "bringing the family closer together" cited by over 60% of RV owners interviewed as the most important benefit of family RV vacations (Roper Starch Worldwide 1996). Although the 50 and over age bracket has traditionally dominated the ranks of RV ownership, predicted trends include a decrease in the median age of ownership. The median age of ownership for RVs overall is 48 years, with 40% of owners in 1997 between 35 to 54 years of age, compared with only 20% in the late 1980s. Recognizing these trends, the RV industry recently started a three year, \$15 million marketing campaign targeting the 34 million aging Baby-Boomers who have time, money, and kids (Recreation Executive Report 1997).

None of this is meant to imply that Montana State Parks must necessarily move aggressively to meet the demands of the growing ranks of RV travelers; the private sector, in particular, has and will continue to meet many of the needs of this group of travelers. It is important to note, however, that the demand for facilities compatible with the needs of both senior citizens and RV



*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

use are likely to increase significantly. According to an on-site survey conducted in 1996, 41% of resident overnight visitors to Montana State Parks utilized an RV, van, or truck for camping, compared with 36% who used tents (Nickerson, Sargeant, and Moisey 1996).

**4) Increased recreation demands by women, ethnic minorities, and the disabled population. Conversely, participation rates among low-income groups have declined**

Along with rapid growth in the variety of recreational opportunities available, there has been a growing divergence in the types of people using facilities. From a larger perspective, this reflects the increased diversity of American culture as a whole, a trend which will continue into the 21st century. Certain segments of the population have become more interested in participating in outdoor recreation, and more assertive about ensuring their right to participate.

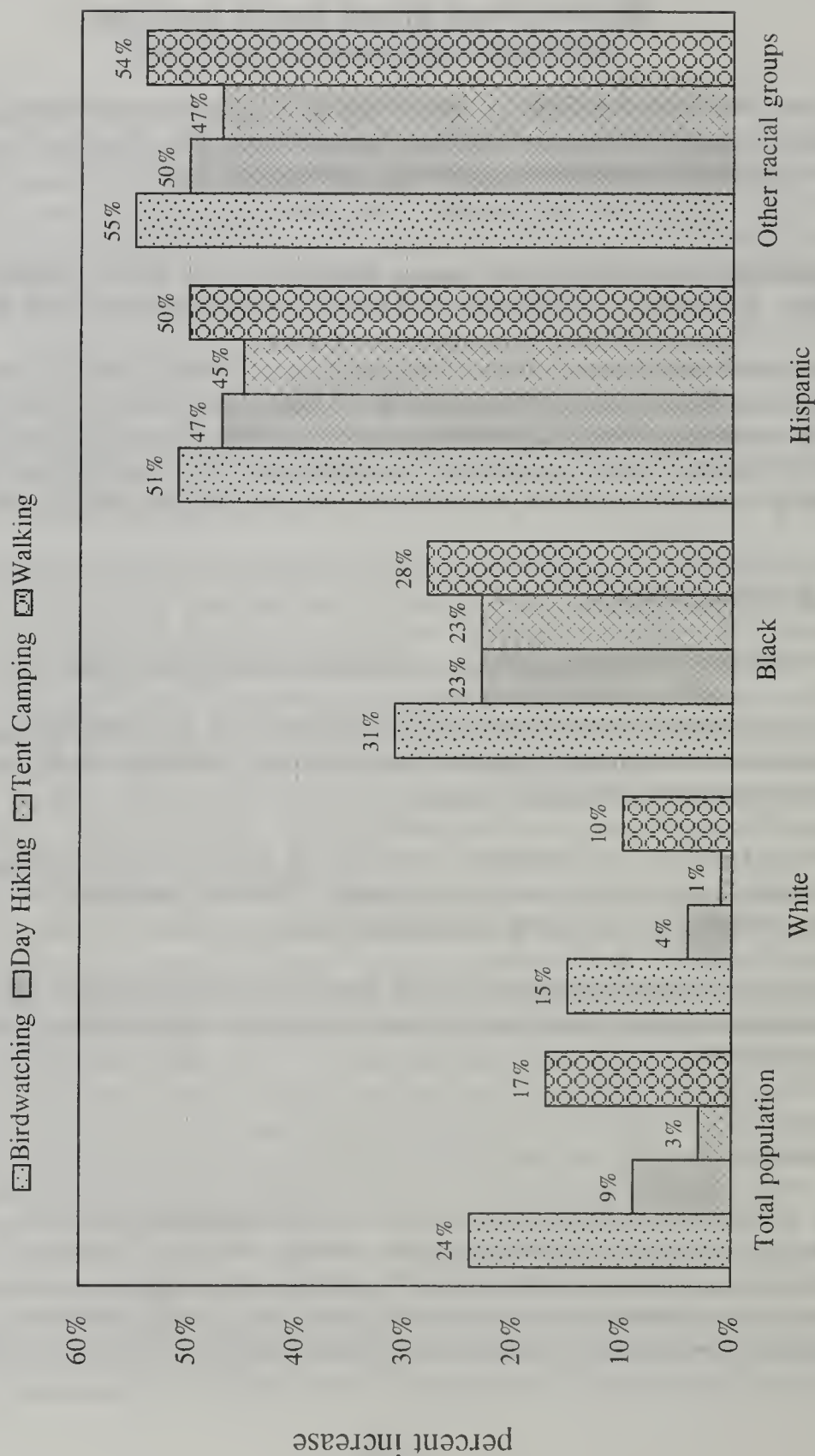
**Summary of Implications**

- \* Increased demand for multi-lingual information and education materials.*
- \* More demand for specialized services and facilities (e.g., women have increasingly moved into recreational pursuits such as hunting and flyfishing, which have traditionally been dominated by men).*
- \* The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has institutionalized the need to consider disabled accessibility during project planning. This has substantially increased opportunities, but also increased development costs.*
- \* Park and recreation managers face a challenge in trying to increase opportunities among low-income groups who have low participation rates in outdoor recreation (Lime 1996).*

**Explanation**

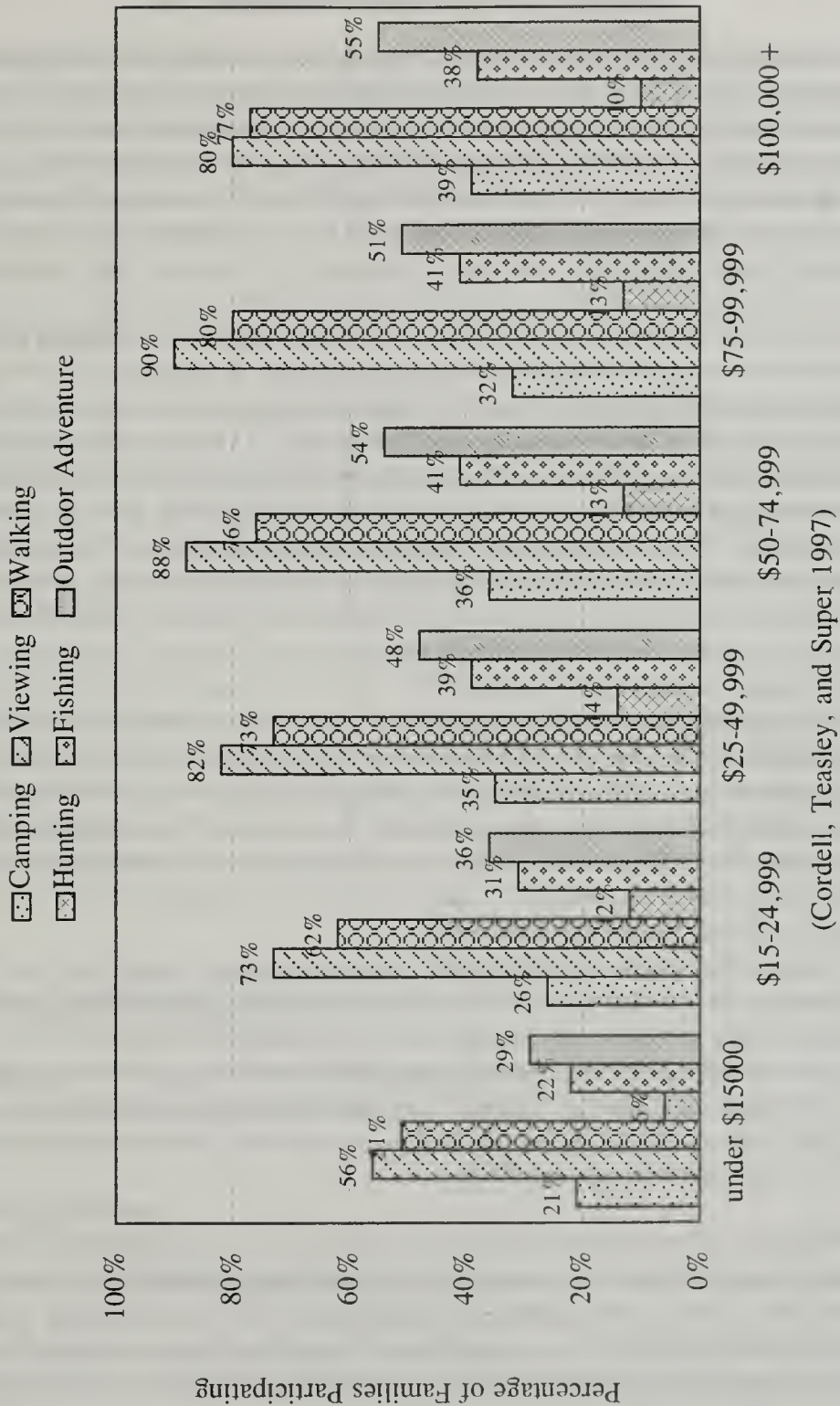
The U.S. population is becoming much more varied in terms of culture, lifestyles, and family types. Outdoor recreation is also becoming more diverse, with more women and minorities participating more actively in a wider range of activities. At the same time, there is concern that opportunities are lacking for lower income groups, who generally participate at lower rates and report lower levels of satisfaction in the activities they do engage in (see figures VI-4 and VI-5).

**FIGURE VI-4**  
**PROJECTED INCREASES IN PARTICIPATION, 1990-2025 (U.S.)**



(Widdekind 1995)

**FIGURE VI-5**  
**PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR RECREATION BY INCOME LEVEL (U.S.)**





*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Not only is the minority proportion of the total population increasing (by 2000 nearly 40% of the children in the U.S. will be from minority groups), but participation rates of minorities in a number of outdoor activities are predicted to increase at a greater rate than for Americans overall (Favinger and Trent 1993; Widdekind 1995). The activities predicted to gain the most ethnic participants include nature viewing and hiking, while other sports such as hunting, fishing, and outdoor adventure activities are expected to gain minority participants at slower rates.

During the last twenty-five years, there has been an increasingly more balanced participation between the sexes in a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits. Participation rates for fitness oriented outdoor activities among male and females are similar, as are participation rates in nature viewing activities (Cordell, Teasley, and Super 1997). Outdoor adventure sports and hunting and fishing are engaged in by more males than females, although participation by females is increasing at a faster rate. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for example, the number of American women purchasing hunting licenses has increased by 100,000 since 1991, while the number of men participating has declined by 200,000 (Barron 1997). As a result of the growing number of women pursuing outdoor interests, the amount of commercial activity oriented around women's activities has increased dramatically.

The number of disabled Americans participating in outdoor recreation is also increasing, along with the demand for more accessible recreational opportunities. Studies show that outdoor recreation contributes to self esteem and accrues other benefits even more profoundly for the disabled than the general population, increasing the importance of providing accessible facilities (Canadian Parks/Recreation Association 1997). The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990--which requires that a range of facilities be accessible to the disabled--has had a profound affect on increasing accessibility.

Recreation patterns are increasingly diverse and complex. Although Americans are participating in greater numbers, and spending more on outdoor recreation than ever before, this growth is not evenly distributed through age, income, education, race, or gender categories. Overall, participation in outdoor recreation decreases as income declines. Lack of opportunity, time, and money for outdoor recreation are especially acute among the urban poor (Roper Starch Worldwide 1996; Frisby 1995).

Although, 54% of the American population as a whole engages in some type of outdoor recreation at least once a month, less than a third of those earning under \$15,000 participate at that rate, a decrease of eight percent since 1995, and an all-time low. Conversely, two-thirds of those earning \$50,000 a year or more engage in some form of outdoor recreation at least once a month. Lack of time, money, and opportunity has created a growing demand for recreational opportunities closer to home, especially among those with lower incomes.

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Lower income Americans--women in particular--are less involved in fitness, have fewer opportunities, and express much lower satisfaction levels than the population as a whole (Frisby 1995). At the same time, these groups tend to experience social and health problems such as depression, lack self-confidence, are more likely to experience relationship difficulties, and have a greater likelihood of subjecting themselves to lifestyle risks than the population as a whole. Because participation in outdoor recreation helps promote physical and psychological health in individuals, families, and communities, fostering recreational opportunities among the relatively disadvantaged is important to the well-being of these populations, as well as society as a whole (Roper Starch Worldwide 1996).

The problems involving low income groups have been exacerbated by a growing income gap between the rich and poor in the U.S. According to recent research by the Congressional Budget Office, the after-tax income of the wealthiest fifth of families rose 28 percent from 1977 to 1992; this upper quintile earns as much after-tax income as the remaining 80 percent of American families combined. After-tax incomes for the poorest fifth of families fell 17 percent during this period, while the middle fifth experienced an increase of only 1 percent (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 1997).

Growth in after-tax income between 1977 and 1992 has been even more pronounced for the upper one percent of American families, who experienced an inflation-adjusted increase of 91 percent. The total after-tax income received by the wealthiest one percent of Americans in 1992 was nearly equivalent to that received by the entire bottom 40 percent. Another way of looking at this is that the wealthiest 2.5 million Americans have nearly the same total income as the 100 million Americans with the lowest incomes (1997).

**5) Growth in new recreation-related technology and business activity, with more opportunities demanding peoples' time**

Explosive change in technology and business is transforming many aspects of American culture, including the way people recreate and the businesses which cater to recreationists.

**Summary of Implications**

*\* Growth in specialized, high-performance equipment (paradoxically, there could also be increases in inexpensive and marginally safe equipment).*

*\* Growth in the proportion of inexperienced recreationists (as people quickly gravitate to rapidly diverging types of new recreation technology).*

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

*\* An ever-increasing array of leisure-time opportunities and vacation destinations competing for peoples' time and attention.*

*\* Questions concerning the difference between short-term fads and long-term trends. This is an important issue for recreation managers attempting to determine how to accommodate new uses.*

*\* Increasing numbers of private concessionaires advertising a wide variety of outdoor opportunities to the public, in many diverse locations. Also, growing pressure to utilize public resources as a key part of these activities, increasing the interaction between the private and public sectors, as well as across agency boundaries (adapted from Lime 1996).*

Recreation and travel/tourism are hot industries, in the midst of continual change. Consumer spending on recreation was six and a half percent of total U.S. spending in 1980, rising steadily to over ten percent by 1994, with outdoor activities a significant portion of the total (Roper Starch Worldwide 1996). Wholesale camping equipment sales reached \$1.38 billion in 1994, and annual growth in sales of over fifteen percent are anticipated in the late 1990s. The dramatic proliferation of sports utility vehicles (SUVs) is one of the most visible signs of America's infatuation with the outdoors. The wild settings of the television ads for SUVs make it clear that the manufacturers are selling more than just a vehicle; they are also selling a passport to the outdoors.

In 1990, over one third of the \$458 billion spent by consumers on transportation involved leisure travel (Stynes, Godbey, and Kraus 1997). Leisure travel and tourism nationwide accounted for between \$400 and 500 billion in spending in 1996, while recreation generated more than \$300 billion annually, according to the 1996 Recreation Roundtable Survey (1997). The travel and tourism industry is now one of the largest employers in the U.S., and is the third largest retail industry, behind automotive dealers and food stores (TIA 1998). While travel and tourism have become huge industries, they have also grown much more competitive, as formerly exotic locations have learned to sell themselves to a global market.

Electronic information links, mass-media, and organized advertising campaigns are quickening the pace at which outdoor activities are popularized. In the U.S. as a whole, there has been a growing cultural propensity for outdoor adventure sports, and rapid technological advances in recreation equipment. Along with this, there has been a proliferation of new sports--especially outdoor adventure sports--often pioneered by the young, before infiltrating the older age classes. Mountain bikes, in-line skates, and snowboards, for example, reached unprecedented levels of popularity in a short period, popularized initially by teenagers and young adults. Although the first mass-produced mountain bikes didn't hit the shelves until 1982, 26 million Americans



*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

owned at least one by 1996 (Thurow 1996). In-line skates were also first marketed in the early 1980s, and are rapidly becoming as popular as bicycles, while snowboarding became an Olympic sport for the first time in 1998. In some circles, recreational affiliations represent an entire lifestyle.

Vacations have long been a key component of Americans' leisure time, with an estimated 232 million trips over 100 miles away from home taken in 1996. Americans now have a dizzying range of vacation options, which are made more complex by the ever-broadening array of recreational opportunities available and increased niche marketing. Americans are tending to spread out their vacations more than in the past, both seasonally and geographically, with more of an emphasis on shorter vacations (Lime 1996). Natural amenities and emerging technology combine rapidly with changing interests and potent local, regional, and state marketing schemes to produce new recreation economies: Twenty years ago, for example, no one drove half-way across the country to Moab, Utah for a vacation oriented around mountain biking.

American vacations have come to rely on an increasingly complex mixture of public and private sector offerings. Out-of-state visitors to Montana might utilize a public resource such as a trout stream, but hire a fishing guide to take them down the river. Other visitors might stay at a privately owned resort or bed and breakfast, but spend most of their time hiking on adjacent national forest land. Conversely, new recreation technology invented by the private sector will, with lightning speed, show up on public land, creating new management challenges at an increasing pace. Because these impacts will cross agency boundaries, there will be continued movement toward cooperative efforts.

### **State-wide Trends**

In addition to the nation-wide trends discussed above, there are a number of state-wide trends with potential effects on Montana State Parks. These may be related to certain nation-wide trends or, in some cases, may be themes that are more specific to Montana or the Rocky Mountain West. As with the nation-wide trends, this is not a comprehensive list, but a brief summary of several which are potentially important.

### **Demography**

In the last decade, Montana's population has undergone significant expansion. After stagnant growth during much of the 1980s, Montana's population began to increase more rapidly

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

during the late 1980s and early 1990s, rising from 799,000 in 1990 to 870,500 in 1995, an average annual increase of 1.7% (see table VI-1).

**TABLE VI-1**

**MONTANA AND UNITED STATES, 1990-2010:  
 POPULATION BY AGE--ACTUAL AND PROJECTED**

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Average Annual Percentage Change</u>		
					<u>90-95</u>	<u>95-2000</u>	<u>2000-2010</u>
<u>United States</u>	248,143,000	263,434,000	276,242,000	300,430,000	1.2	1.0	0.8
* 17 and under	63,773,000	69,034,000	71,789,000	73,617,000	1.6	0.8	0.3
* 18 to 64	153,352,000	160,752,000	169,131,000	186,709,000	0.9	1.0	1.0
* 65 and over	31,018,000	33,648,000	35,322,000	40,104,000	1.6	1.0	1.3
<u>Montana</u>	799,000	870,500	920,000	1,014,000	1.7	1.1	1.0
* 17 and under	222,000	243,700	253,000	261,000	1.9	0.8	0.3
* 18 to 64	471,000	511,900	546,000	615,000	1.7	1.3	1.2
* 65 and over	106,000	114,900	121,000	138,000	1.6	1.0	1.3

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; and the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana, 1996.

Montana is currently the 14th fastest growing state in the country, increasing 10.1% between 1990 and 1996 (Nevada's 33.4% growth rate was the fastest in the nation during this period, while the overall national rate was 6.7%). Two-thirds of Montana's growth from 1990 to 1996 was attributable to the migration of new residents to the state, with the remainder coming from natural increase. Of the recent migrants, two-thirds of them had ties to Montana, and many are ex-Montanans returning home after living in another state for a period of time (Reichert and Sylvester 1997).

Most of the population growth during the 1990s occurred as a result of migration to the intermountain valleys of western Montana, concentrating in and around the state's larger urban centers. Between 1990 and 1996, Montana had a net in-migration from other states of 55,000 people, compared to a net out-migration of 50,000 during the 1980s (Sylvester 1997). Forecasts for Montana net in-migration for the 2000-2010 period are for an average of 7,000 per

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

year, up from the 4,100 annual average for 1995-2000, but down from the 8,500 per year experienced during the 1990-1995 period (Polzin 1996).

Much of western Montana contains the natural amenities, as well as travel and community infrastructure, that is attractive to both migrants and tourists. In addition to impacts associated with the sheer increase in people, large numbers of new migrants to various locations in western Montana carry the potential of changing the social and cultural structure of the communities they settle in, as they may bring different values than those shared by long-time residents.

The fastest growing Montana counties tend to be located in regions adjacent to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks or along the travel corridor between them, as well as near the Interstate Highway System. A notable exception to this is Ravalli County in the Bitterroot Valley, which posted a 34% increase in population between 1990 and 1996, the largest percentage increase of any county in the state. During this period, more than 90% of Ravalli County's population increase was due to in-migration (Sylvester 1997).

Other rapidly growing counties with total increases of more than 10% during the 1990-96 period included the following: Jefferson (22.2%); Broadwater (21.2%); Flathead (20.2); Gallatin (20.1%); Lake (18.4%); Stillwater (16.9%); Sanders (16.9%); Carbon (14.2%); Musselshell (13.8%); Madison (13.1%); Mineral (12.4%); Missoula (12.3%); Lewis and Clark (11.8%); Yellowstone (11 %); and Park (10.8%). The county with the largest total increase in population during this period was Yellowstone, which grew by 8,300 people, followed by Flathead, Gallatin, and Missoula counties (see table VI-2).

A 1996 state-wide survey helps illustrate the urban orientation present in even such a rural state as Montana. According to the results, 55 percent of the respondents who were state park users identified their residence as being in either a large city or town, while 63 percent of the Park Passport holders in the survey responded similarly (see figure VI-6).

In addition to growth in the larger cities, some smaller communities throughout western Montana--as well as Lewistown, the county seat of Fergus County in central Montana--are also undergoing relatively rapid population increases. The rural areas around these urban centers are gaining migrants at the greatest rates, along with new subdivisions, homes, and roads. As a result, recreational opportunities on private land in these areas is likely to decrease, contributing to additional pressure on public resources.

At the same time these increases were occurring, 18 of Montana's 56 counties posted decreases in population between 1990 and 1996, mostly in eastern Montana (Sylvester 1997). The relentless mechanization of agriculture has led to long-term population declines throughout



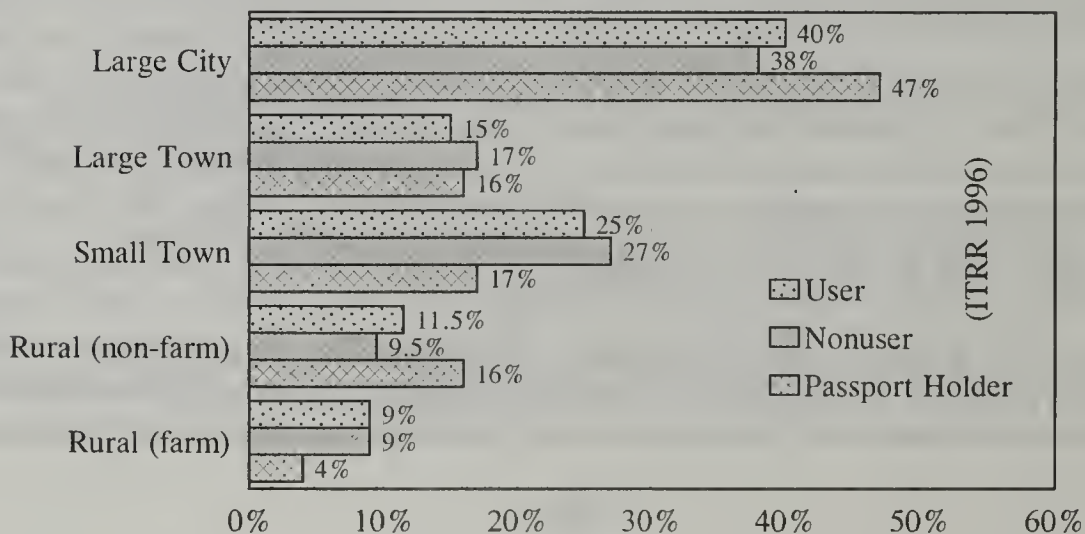
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**TABLE VI-2  
RAPIDLY GROWING MONTANA COUNTIES, 1990-1996**

<u>County</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>Total Increase</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Net In-migration</u>
Yellowstone	113,419	125,880	12,461	11.0	8,147
Flathead	59,218	71,179	11,961	20.2	10,152
Gallatin	50,463	60,630	10,167	20.1	7,694
Missoula	78,687	88,338	9,651	12.3	6,357
Ravalli	25,010	33,622	8,612	34.4	8,211
Lewis & Clark	47,495	53,086	5,591	11.8	3,931
Lake	21,041	24,912	3,871	18.4	3,333
Cascade	77,691	81,359	3,668	4.7	0
Jefferson	7,939	9,699	1,760	22.2	1,553
Park	14,562	16,140	1,578	10.8	1,301
<hr/>					
Montana	799,065	879,372	80,307	10.1	55,482

*Source: Montana Business Quarterly, Summer, 1997*

**FIGURE VI-6  
PLACE OF RESIDENCE  
(mailout survey)**



*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

much of the northern Great Plains region, which attracts few new migrants, and has experienced a relentless drain of young people moving away to other locations. The result in dozens of counties in this region has been an eroding and increasingly older population base; as long-term residents age, there are fewer women left in the child-bearing age categories, resulting in dwindling opportunities for natural population increases. By contrast, the faster growing counties in western Montana have a population base which, on average, is much younger than in counties with slow-growing or declining populations.

While the rate of Montana's population growth has declined during the last few years, forecasts suggest that Montana's population will continue to grow slightly faster than the national average, rising to 920,000 by the year 2000 and 1,014,000 by 2010 (Polzin 1996). When resident population growth is examined together with future prospects for non-resident visitation, the most likely forecast into the early twenty-first century is for a relatively gradual but constantly increasing pressure on the state's natural and cultural heritage.

The age structure of Montana's growing population also has repercussions for both the state as a whole, and the state park system in particular. Between 1980 and 2010 the median age of Montanans will increase from 29 to 39 (compared with 37 for the U.S.), due in part to the state's growing attraction for retirees (Favinger and Trent 1993).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of Montanans 65 and older will increase from 13.1% of the population in 1995, to 24.5% in 2025. In 1995, Montana ranked 23rd in the nation in its percentage of persons 65 older, but it is predicted to jump to third place by the year 2025. By contrast, the percent of Montanans under 20 years of age will decrease from 30.2% to 24.3% of the population during this period, giving the state a rank of 40th in the country (Thackeray 1997).

Between 1995 and 2025, Montana's minority population is also expected to increase. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Montana's non-Hispanic white population will decline from 91.5% to 86.7% during this period. Montana's Native Americans will remain the state's largest minority group, increasing their percent of the population from 5.8% to 8.2%. The African American and Asian American populations in Montana are forecast to grow as well, although they are expected to remain small compared to many other states (Thackeray 1997).

## **Economy**

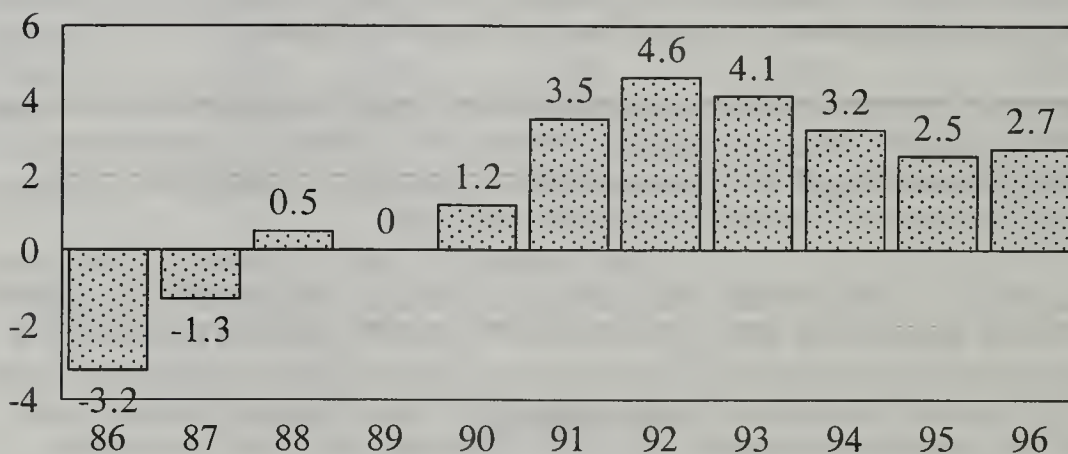
Montana's population dynamics are closely linked to economic performance. Following a significant slide during much of the 1980s, Montana's economy has been in solid shape during the 1990s. The University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research predicts

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

that the state's economy for the late 1990s will generally mirror the population forecasts for the remainder of the century: moderate economic growth of approximately 2% annually, but slower than the 3-5% annual increases experienced during the early 1990s (see figure VI-7). According to the Bureau, Montana's projected (economic) growth rate will exceed the national average, but the state will be among the slowest in the Rocky Mountain Region, expected to be the fastest growing area of the nation (Polzin 1996).

**FIGURE VI-7**

**NON-FARM LABOR INCOME, 1986-1996**



(Polzin 1998)

Because it is more diversified, Montana's economy is more likely to better survive severe downturns in its natural resource industries than has been the case in the past; tourism and high-tech manufacturing, in particular, have grown in importance in the last decade. Tourism is now the second largest industry in Montana, after agriculture: According to research done for the state tourism agency, tourism directly accounts for 31,000 jobs in the state, and may be responsible for another 29,000 jobs in related businesses. Total tourist expenditures in Montana are estimated to be \$1.5 billion annually. Montana leads the region in travel-generated employment, but--somewhat surprisingly--ranks only 42nd nationally (Travel Montana 1998).



*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

In spite of a strong economy, low unemployment rate, and the affluent tourists and retirees the state attracts, annual income for Montana residents consistently ranks among the lowest in the country. In 1996, for example, Montana's per-capita personal income was \$19,214, 47th in the nation. This was only 79 percent of the national average, which was \$24,426. Montana has lost ground in this category during the last decade: In 1986, by contrast, Montana's per capita personal income was \$12,160, which placed it 40th in the nation (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis 1997).

Although median income levels for four-person Montana families increased from \$36,696 in 1992 to \$42,987 in 1995, this is still well below the \$49,687 median income level for the U.S. as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau 1997c). The percentage of Montanans living below the poverty level increased from 13.4 in 1994 to 16.2 in 1996, compared with 13.8 for the U.S. as a whole (1997b).

Montana has been and remains a relatively poor state economically. While Montana's economy is currently strong and becoming more diverse, the state still has relatively few manufacturing jobs, lacks a significant number of major corporate headquarters, and remains a long distance from most major markets. The average Montanan has less purchasing power than many of its out-of-state guests, which is one rationale for the differential resident/non-resident fee structure in Montana State Parks.

### **Selected Recreation Trends**

Outdoor recreation is of primary importance to Montanans. According to a 1997 survey of adult Montanans, the percentage of residents who said they participated in various activities during the previous two years (anywhere, not just in a state park) were as follows:

- \* Picnicking--78%
- \* Trail use--56 %
- \* Camping--56%
- \* Wildlife viewing (at least 1 trip a mile or more from home)--50%
- \* Fishing--44%
- \* Boating--39%
- \* Visiting a Montana State Park--36%
- \* Hunting--32%
- \* Jet skiing--8% (Duda 1997)

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Another survey done in 1996 at a selection of state parks asked visitors whether anyone in their group had ever participated in various activities in a Montana State Park, with the following responses from residents (ITRR):

- \* Wildlife viewing--39%
- \* Visitor center--37%
- \* Interpretive trail--36%
- \* School program--23%
- \* Educational/interpretive program--22%
- \* Interpretive signs/exhibits--20%
- \* Special events--15%
- \* Family programs--8%

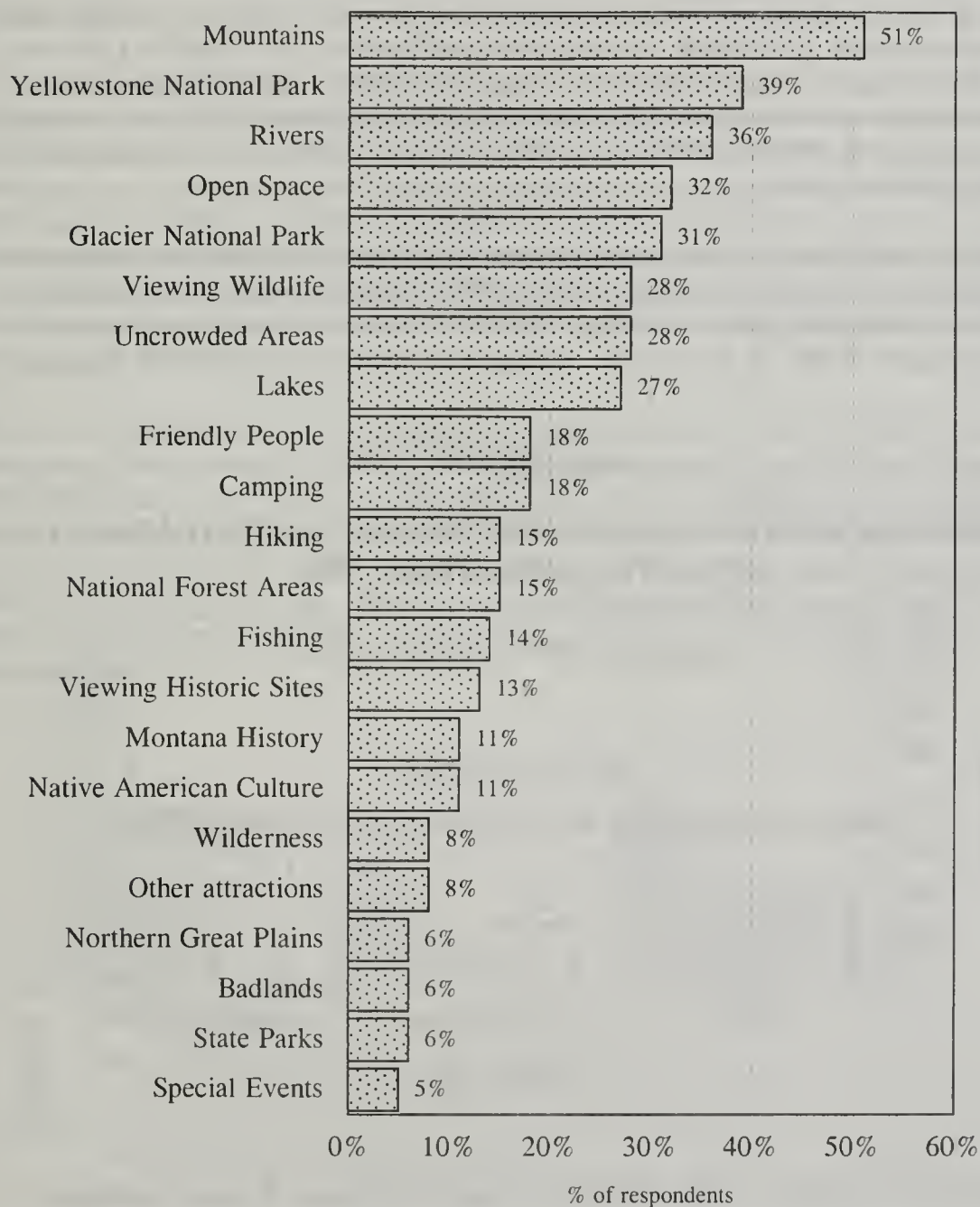
Non-resident visitors to Montana are attracted to the state by many of the same opportunities residents find appealing, although their preferences are not always the same. A 1996 Summer Non-resident Travel Survey conducted by the University of Montana underscores the importance of outdoor recreation, scenic and natural amenities, and historical and cultural resources (see figure VI-8).

When non-resident travelers were asked what their single, *primary* reason for visiting Montana was, the themes remained the same, although the actual ranking was different, as listed below (ITRR 1997a):

- \* Glacier National Park--25%
- \* Yellowstone National Park--22%
- \* Mountains--12%
- \* Fishing--7%
- \* Montana history--6%
- \* Open space--5%
- \* Uncrowded areas--5%
- \* Special events--4%
- \* Friendly people--3%

Based on this survey, it is clear that Montana State Parks--along with the National Parks and Forests--offer the types of things which are at the core of why visitors come to Montana. Although only six percent of respondents specifically listed state parks as a reason for visiting Montana, eleven percent of non-resident tourists visited a state park in the summer of 1996 (ITRR 1997a). Two of the strengths of the state park system--water recreation and historical/cultural sites--are a powerful attraction for visitors who decide to visit one or more of Montana's State Parks. As the population in both Montana and the country as a whole

**FIGURE VI-8**  
**VACATIONERS REASONS FOR VISITING MONTANA**  
**(JUNE-SEPTEMBER, 1996)**



(Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research 1997)

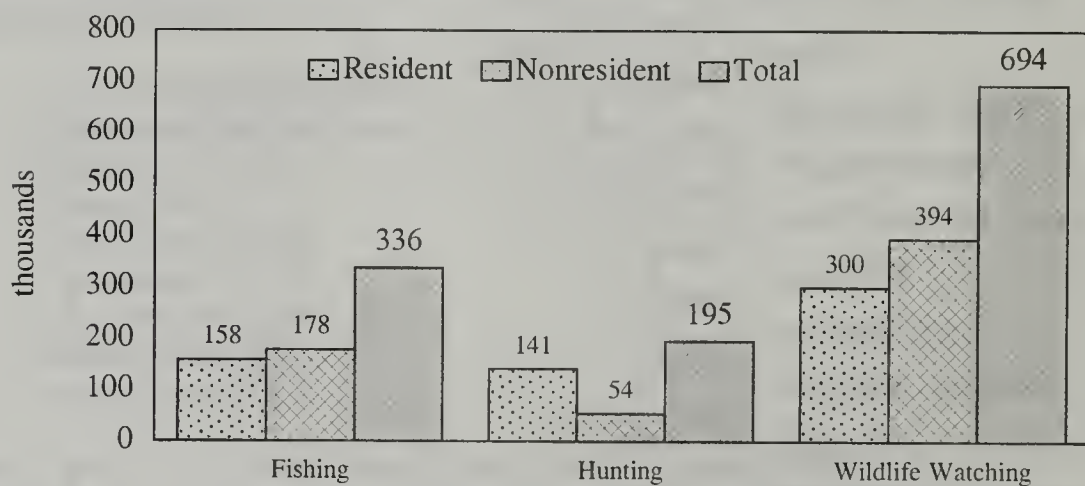


continues to age, it is likely that less active forms of recreation such as visiting historic and cultural sites will increase in importance.

The little data available on non-resident participation in specific Montana outdoor activities indicates growing participation. The proportion of total Montana hunting and fishing licenses held by non-residents, for example, has increased steadily since 1975, so that by 1995 over 40% of all total licenses were held by non-residents (EQC 1996). In 1996, non-resident anglers outnumbered residents, and constituted a significant proportion of hunters (see figure VI-9). In fiscal year 1997, two-thirds of all FWP hunting and fishing license revenue was collected from non-residents.

Although the number of American anglers declined slightly from 1991 to 1996, participation among Montanans increased during this period (USFWS 1997). In addition to continued strong interest among Montanans in fishing, the state has been the destination of a growing number of anglers during the past decade. Fishing is an important activity in the Montana

**FIGURE VI-9**  
**MONTANA RESIDENT AND NONRESIDENT PARTICIPATION IN**  
**SELECTED ACTIVITIES, 1996**



(USFWS 1997)

State Park system, because of the importance of water-based sites. Fourteen percent of respondents listed fishing as a reason for visiting Montana in the 1996 non-resident visitation

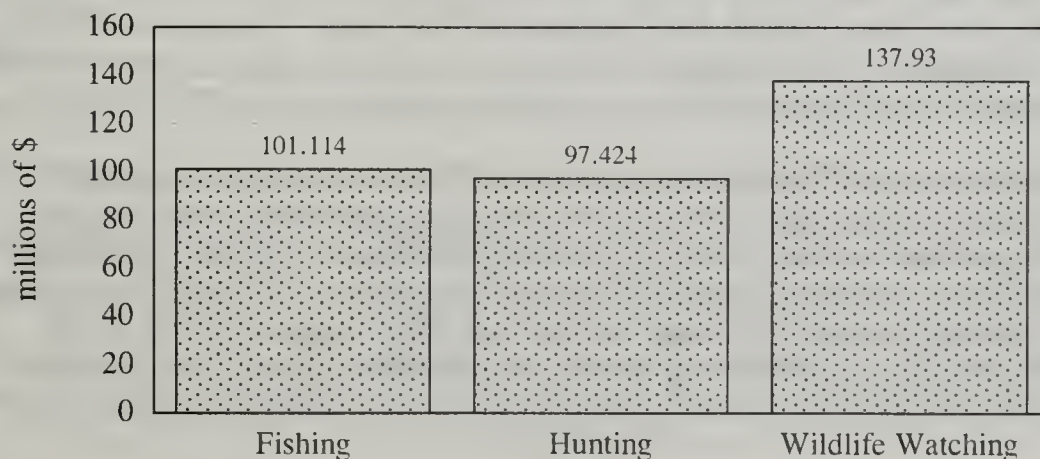
*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

survey, while seven percent said it was a primary reason for visiting the state. The number of fishing licenses held by non-residents increased from 1990 to 1994, with a slight decline in 1996. The impact of Whirling Disease may adversely affect fishing-related tourism in the state, although increasing interest in Montana's warm water angling opportunities may counter this somewhat.

From a state-wide perspective, hunting remains a vital outdoor recreation activity for Montanans; as of 1994, Montanans participated in hunting at a rate which was three times higher than the national average (McCollough, Dusek, and Dolsen 1995). The number of Americans as a whole who hunted declined significantly during the 1970s and 1980s, before leveling off somewhat since 1990 (Lacey 1997). Overall, national and state-wide trends in hunting participation should not have a significant impact on Montana State Parks. Compared to fishing, hunting is a less significant factor affecting visitation at Montana State Parks; while some hunting occurs in state parks, it is not a major reason for visiting parks for either residents or non-residents.

Wildlife viewing had more total participation among both residents and non-residents than hunting and fishing combined (USFWS 1997). Montanans engaged in wildlife viewing at greater rates than the nation average, and spend more money on it than they do on either hunting or fishing (USFWS 1997--see figure VI-10). In spite of the popularity of wildlife viewing among Montanans, there are more non-resident visitors to the state who engage in wildlife viewing than residents. According to the 1996 Summer Non-Resident Visitor Survey, 28% of the respondents stated that wildlife viewing was one of the reasons they came to Montana (ITRR 1997a).

**FIGURE VI-10**  
**EXPENDITURES BY MONTANA RESIDENTS, 1996**



(USFWS 1997)

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Throughout the country and in Montana, wildlife viewing and nature study are likely to be one of the outdoor activities with the fastest growth rate in the future. This trend has been building for some time: According to forecasts made in 1987, for example, nature study was forecast to be the fastest growing outdoor recreation activity in Montana, followed by day hiking, picnicking, and fishing (McCool and Frost 1987--see table VI-3).

### **Non-resident Visitation**

Between 1980 and 1995, there has been a significant increase in the number of non-resident visitors to the state, a jump from approximately 5 million to 8 million, an average annual increase of approximately 3.6% (see figures VI-11 and VI-12). Along with the growth in non-resident visitors, Montana lodging tax receipts increased rapidly, doubling between late 1980s and mid-1990s (see figure VI-13).

Montana non-resident visitors represent every state and Canadian province, and at least twenty foreign countries. The largest group of visitors come from the Pacific Northwest (22 percent of the total). According to the 1996 Non-resident Summer Travel Survey, the leading states and provinces where Montana visitors originate from are as follows:

- \* Washington--12% of all non-resident visitors
- \* California--9%
- \* Idaho--6%
- \* Colorado--5%
- \* Oregon, Utah, Wyoming, Minnesota, and Alberta--4% each
- \* Texas, North Dakota, and Michigan--3% each

Visitors from other countries represent 12% of the non-resident visitors to Montana: 7% of these are from Canada and 5% from Europe. Of the non-Canadian foreign visitors, 40% are from Germany, 15% from England, and 12% from the Netherlands. There are also significant numbers of Japanese visitors to Montana, but there are not accurate estimates because of their tendency to travel on tour busses, which are not picked up by the surveys (ITRR 1997a).

The travel characteristics of foreign visitors to Montana differ from other non-resident travelers in four significant ways: 1) Foreign visitors tend to spend more money and stay longer on vacation than domestic visitors; 2) Foreign visitors are more likely to be visiting Montana for the first time (66% compared to 25% for all visitors ); 3) Foreign visitors come to Montana primarily to visit Yellowstone National Park (54% compared to 22% for all visitors), and; 4) The majority of foreign visitors are in Montana primarily for a vacation (76% compared to 49% for all visitors). According to the 1996 Non-resident Summer Travel

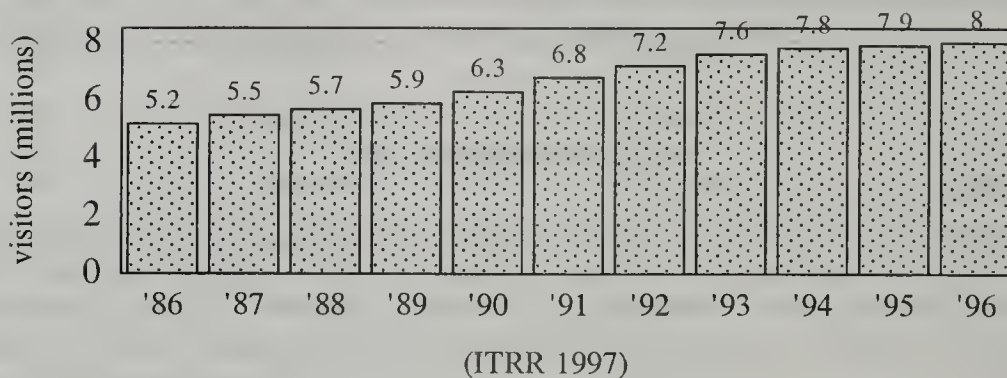


**TABLE VI-3**  
**ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ADULTS PARTICIPATING, 1985-2000**

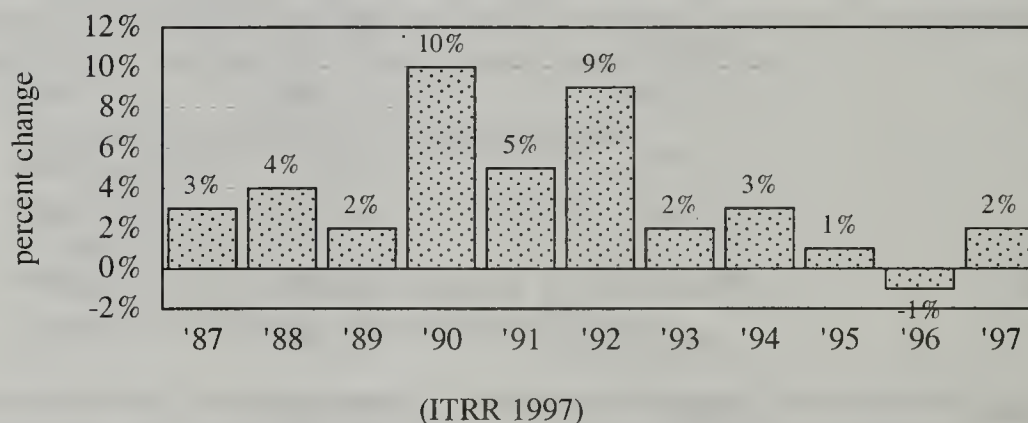
Activity	Number of Montanans, 1985	Number of Montanans, 2000	Percent Change
Bicycling	222,100	249,900	12 %
Camping	300,700	352,100	17 %
Horseback Riding	128,700	146,200	14 %
Hunting	214,200	253,200	18 %
Jogging	139,400	152,900	10 %
Nature Study	187,800	226,100	20 %
Off-Road 4 WD	142,000	165,300	16 %
Motorcycle or ATV	68,900	74,800	9 %
Picnicking	434,700	516,900	19 %
Day hiking	452,500	537,500	19 %
Canoeing	65,200	72,100	11 %
Fishing	326,000	386,500	19 %
Motorboating	191,400	222,100	16 %
Rafting	104,100	117,100	13 %
Pool Swimming	202,400	236,200	17 %
Lake or Stream Fishing	243,700	275,200	13 %
Waterskiing	84,600	93,000	10 %
Nordic Skiing	104,000	122,100	17 %
Alpine Skiing	109,500	119,600	9 %
Ice-skating	72,700	83,500	15 %
Snowmobile	96,100	108,200	12 %

(McCool and Frost 1987)

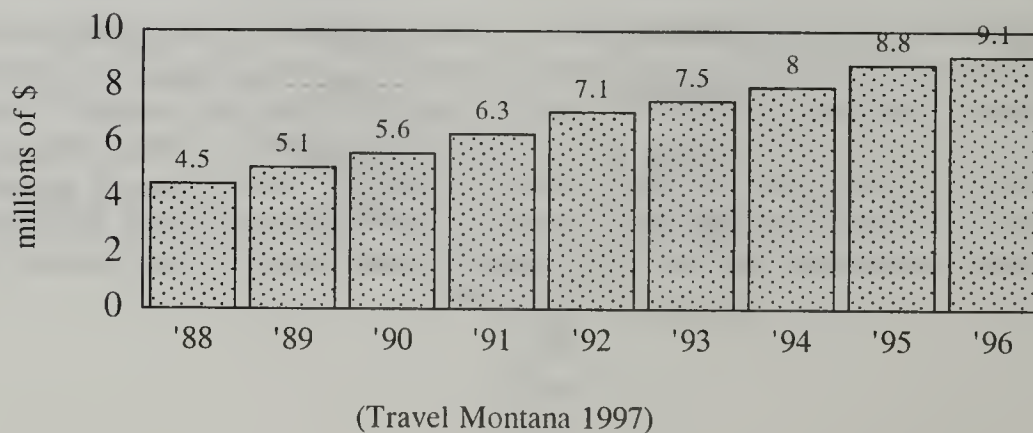
**FIGURE VI-11**  
**NONRESIDENT VISITATION TO MONTANA**



**FIGURE VI-12**  
**YEARLY CHANGE IN VISITATION TO MONTANA**



**FIGURE VI-13**  
**MONTANA LODGING TAX COLLECTION**



*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Survey, vacationing was listed as at least part of the reason for a Montana visit by 77% of all travelers; suggesting that many travelers are combining vacations with business (Nickerson 1997a, 1998).

The most rapid growth in non-resident visitation occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the pace slowing considerably in the mid-1990s. From 1994 to 1995, the increase in non-resident visitors was only 1%, the beginning of what appears to a period of less rapid growth in out-of-state visitation. Growth is expected to continue, although it will most likely be at the modest levels experienced during the last few years:

*In the future we may look back on 1995 as the turning point year. Rather than growth in leaps and bounds, 1996 will probably act much like its predecessor. In fact, there will probably be a number of stable years of very slow growth, with possible slight decreases, until the turn of the century (Nickerson 1996).*

In spite of the recent slower growth in visitation, Montana has generally kept pace with national travel and tourism trends, except for air travel. Overall, the Montana travel and tourism industry is relatively optimistic about the future, particularly if gas prices, the economy, and the Canadian exchange rate remain stable or improve (Nickerson 1997). The impact of this trend on the Montana State Park system is that, while pressure from increasing numbers of non-resident visitors will continue into the twenty-first century, the rate at which that pressure increased during the late 1980s and early 1990s is unlikely to be duplicated in the near future.

While western Montana has traditional been the primary destination for tourists--and will continue to be so--the eastern portion of the state is gaining in popularity. In order to take some of the pressure off the heavily-traveled mountainous portion of the state, Travel Montana has focused greater marketing attention on the east, and the effort appears to paying off with increased visitation in at least some parts of eastern Montana.

According to the 1996 Non-Resident Summer Travel Survey, seeing the eastern badlands was listed by six percent of the respondents as a reason for visiting Montana, while six percent also listed the Northern Great Plains as a reason for coming. Considering that uncrowded areas and open space combined were given by 60% of non-resident visitors as a reason for visiting Montana, tourism in eastern Montana is likely to increase, with potential impacts on state parks such as Hell Creek, Makoshika, Tongue River Reservoir, and Rosebud Battlefield (ITRR 1997a).

In west-central Montana, completion of the planned Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, the approaching Lewis and Clark Bicentennial (2003-2005), and interest in the expanding Rivers



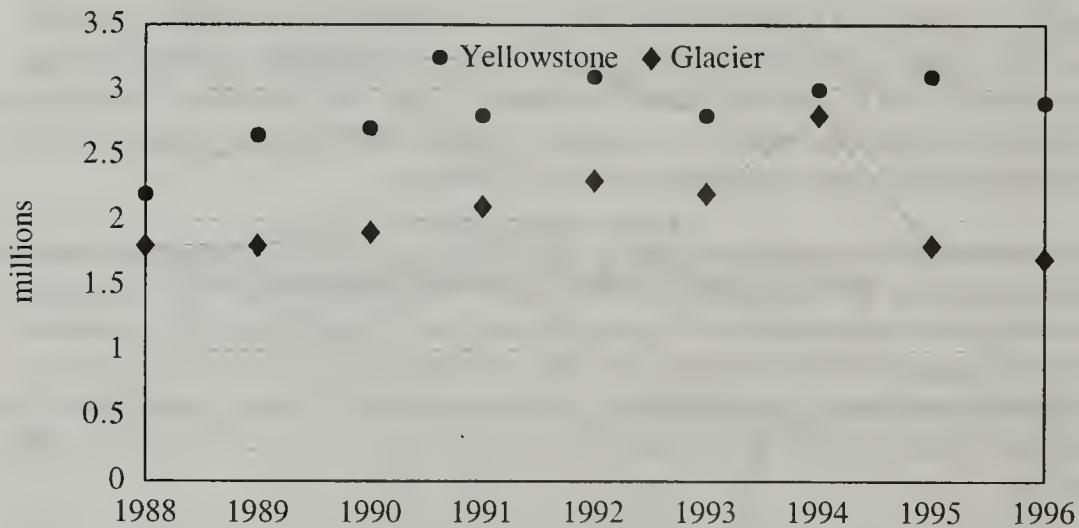
Edge bike trail are likely to have substantial impacts on Giant Springs non-resident visitation, with possible spill-over to other Region 4 parks and FAS units.

### Visitation at Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks

Glacier National Park and Yellowstone National Park are anchors of the Montana tourism industry; they are key reasons why many non-residents visit the state, which in turn affects state park visitation. Over two-thirds of total non-resident visitor expenditures in Montana change hands in the Glacier-Yellowstone National Park travel corridor.

Visitation at Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks has roughly mirrored the state-wide trends discussed above, particularly during the boom years (see figure VI-14). After climbing steadily during the late 1980s and early 1990s, visitation to Glacier National Park declined by 13.5% between 1994 and 1995 (ITRR 1996). Widely publicized road repair work on Going-to-the-Sun Highway in the mid 1990s, combined with late openings and a diminished flow of Canadian visitors have contributed to the drop in visitation to Glacier. With fewer visitors coming to Glacier, the pool of potential visitors to the Flathead Lake area, in particular, has dropped.

FIGURE VI-14  
NATIONAL PARK VISITS



(Nickerson 1997)

*Chapter VI: Trends Affecting Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The visitation declines in the Glacier/Flathead area have been strongly influenced by the erosion of Canadian currency and a corresponding drop in Canadian visitors. After peaking in 1992, the number of border crossings into Montana has declined each year, dropping 9.6% between 1994 and 1995 (Nickerson 1996). Since then, the rate of decline in Canadian visitation has decreased.

Visitation to Yellowstone National Park has outpaced Glacier's visitation every year since 1980, and has generally increased at a faster rate. Yellowstone visitation grew steadily between 1993 and 1995, when it exceeded 3.1 million, before dropping in 1996. One future uncertainty is how long Yellowstone visitation can continue to grow: Park staff are examining limitations on winter use and discouraging area businesses from promoting the park.

For non-resident visitors, state parks are seldom the primary purpose for visiting Montana, but typically represent an important ancillary attraction. As detailed in the next chapter, visitation at a selection of state parks in the two FWP regions most affected by Yellowstone--Regions 3 and 5--increased by 59% and 19%, respectively, between 1985 and 1995. At least some of the parks in these two regions are powerfully affected by the strong pull of Yellowstone, while remaining less impacted by changes in Canadian visitation. Along with Regions 2 and 7, these regions also benefit from being bisected by the major east-west highway corridor (I-90/94) in the northwestern portion of the U.S.; more than 93% of tourist trips in Montana involve driving (Favinger/Trent 1993).





## VII

# MONTANA STATE PARK VISITATION TRENDS AND SATISFACTION MEASURES

### Introduction and Summary

This section summarizes state park visitation data collected in 1995, the last time a comprehensive analysis of visitation trends was completed. In addition, 1995 visitation is compared with results from prior years, including 1980, 1985, and 1994. Finally, the last section of this chapter provides of an overview of some recent survey results regarding satisfaction levels with various aspects of Montana State Parks.

The principal source of much of the visitation information included here is vehicle counts generated by traffic counters. Once collected, the number of vehicles entering a site for a given period of time was multiplied by a persons-per-vehicle ratio to obtain a visitor number. Regional staff have periodically conducted observational surveys at selected sites around the state in an effort to obtain reliable persons-per-vehicle numbers.

In addition to vehicle counts and persons-per-vehicle ratios, the third main type of data included here are resident/non-resident ratios. These ratios, which have been calculated periodically over the years, have typically been based on license plate surveys at the entrance of sites, or--to a lesser extent--tallying fee envelopes.

Based on the available information, a number of themes emerged from the analysis of Montana State Park visitation trends, as listed below:

- \* Visitation at 31 Montana State Park indicator sites increased 21% between 1985 and 1995, for an average annual increase of 1.9%.

- \* Based on observational surveys at various state park sites in 1995, the state-wide percentage of resident visitors was estimated to be 66%, up from 52% in 1985. The trend since the late 1980s is an increasing percentage of resident visitors in Montana State Parks.

- \* In 1995, an estimated 1,360,000 visits were recorded at 28 state parks where traffic count data or estimates were available. Overall visitation to Montana's 41 State Parks

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

is estimated to have been 1.6 million in 1995. It is possible that total visitation estimates in recent years have not fully accounted for the loss of the Canyon Ferry units and other sites. Thus, while visitation at many parks in the system has increased in recent years, overall system visitation may have experienced short-term declines due to downsizing in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

\* In general, visitation at "urban" state parks (e.g., Giant Springs, Lake Elmo, Spring Meadow Lake, Lone Pine, and Frenchtown Pond) has increased significantly throughout the state since 1980, and risen much faster than the state-wide average. According to 1995 estimates, Giant Springs in Great Falls was the most heavily visited park in the system.

\* Between 1985 and 1995, visitation at selected park indicator sites increased most rapidly in Regions 4 (76%), 3 (58%), and 5 (19%). In Regions 3 and 4, visitation between 1985 and 1995 increased at all parks for which there was comparable data.

\* Based on available data, Region 3 parks recorded the most visits in 1995 (358,960), followed by Region 4 (302,275).

\* Visitor counts indicate there have been significant long-term visitation declines to Region 1 state parks, particularly the Flathead Lake system. A poor U.S. Canadian exchange rate has likely contributed to this trend.

It is important to note that there are some significant limitations in the visitation data presented here, including the following:

\* Visitation data is not available for all sites for comparable years.

\* Visitor count methods sometimes varied widely from region to region, site to site, and year to year.

\* The reliability of the observational surveys depends on the sample size and distribution of the sample periods. These often varied widely from site to site.

\* From the late 1980s through the early 1990s, parks and FAS visitation estimates were based on very limited traffic counter data, due to limited counters and staffing. Even when traffic counters are in place, they sometimes break down, produce unreliable results, or are not read at proper intervals.

\* Short-term visitation changes at particular sites are often the result of influences such

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

as construction, water levels, weather, and other factors. When data for only a few years is examined, the potential for these factors leading to inaccurate conclusions is increased, particularly if site specific information for every year being examined is not included.

\* Demands on regional staff time have made it difficult to establish a process which has consistency and reliability not only state-wide, but within the same region. To get a better impression of long range trends, consistent data collection over a period of year is needed to reduce the chance that anomalous years won't present an inaccurate picture.

### **Park Visitation By Region**

The 1995 visitor count information discussed below is largely derived from traffic counter data, with some estimates made for periods and places where counters were not in place. Regional staff performed periodic observational site surveys to calculate persons-per-vehicle ratios; at sites where this was not possible, staff relied on earlier site information or data from indicator sites. The state-wide parks persons-per-vehicle ratio for 1995 is estimated to be 2.86.

Resident/non-resident information was also collected during the observational surveys, with some reliance on fee envelopes. As with the case with the persons-per-vehicle ratios, it was not possible to collect this information at every site in 1995.

The 1994 data is mix of actual counts and estimates. The information for 1980 and 1985 was taken from the 1986 annual visitation report, which included estimates for park and FAS sites for 1980 through 1986. The visitation numbers in that report are derived from a mix of actual traffic count data, and estimates based on Montana Department of Transportation highway traffic counts. The 1986 report is the most recent comprehensive source of state park and FAS visitation data.

#### **Region 1 (Kalispell)**

An estimated 230,111 people visited Region 1 state parks in 1995, excluding Wild Horse Island (see table VII-1). The most heavily visited park unit in the region was Wayfarers, with 43,075 visits. The second and third most heavily visited units, respectively, were West Shore (29,154 visits) and Big Arm (25,183 visits). Overall, the Flathead Lake system recorded



*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

134,182 visits. Excluding Wild Horse Island, the least visited site in the region was Thompson Falls (8,236 visits).

**TABLE VII-1**  
**REGION 1 PARK VISITATION, 1995**

<b>PARK</b>	<b>TOTAL VEHICLES</b>	<b>TOTAL VISITS</b>	<b>AVERAGE VISITS PER DAY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED % MT RESIDENTS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED % NON-MT RESIDENTS</b>
Big Arm	9,849	27,183	75	48%	52%
Finley Point	9,596	15,830	43	59%	41%
Wayfarers	16,959	43,075	118	54%	46%
West Shore	11,478	29,154	80	34%	66%
Wild Horse Is.	---	---	---	62%	38%
Yellow Bay	6,576	18,940	52	60%	40%
Flathead Lake Subtotal	51,458	134,182	369	53%	47%
Lk. M. Ronan	9,017	22,182	61	64%	36%
Logan	9,159	21,982	60	38%	62%
Lone Pine	8,342	20,937	58	86%	14%
Thom. Falls	3,376	8,236	23	51%	49%
Whitefish Lake	9,110	22,592	62	55%	45%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>90,461</b>	<b>230,111</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>44%</b>

NOTE: Traffic counts started in January, 1995 at Big Arm, West Shore, Lake Mary Ronan, and Lone Pine. Collection at most of the other sites started in May, 1995, and ran at least until September 30 at all sites, and through December at most sites. Visits include both day use and camping. Average persons-per-vehicle figure for the region was 2.54; for the Flathead system, it was 2.61.

Region 1 staff estimate that 56% of the visitors were Montana residents, and 44% were non-residents; this is the second lowest resident visitation in the state. The percentage of resident visitors was heaviest at Lone Pine (86%); the lowest resident percentage in 1995 was at West Shore (34%).

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Between 1994 and 1995, the total number of visitors recorded in Region 1 increased at 6 out of the 10 units where counts were done, but declined overall (see table VII-2). During this period, the most pronounced visitation drops were at Finley Point and Wayfarers, which registered declines of 35% and 23%, respectively. Conversely, significant increases during this period were posted at Lake Mary Ronan (+55%) and Thompson Falls (+51%). Between 1994 and 1995, visitation to the Flathead Lake system (excluding Wild Horse Island) declined 14%. It is worth noting that Big Arm and Wayfarers were affected by construction during portions of the prime season in 1995.

**TABLE VII-2**  
**1980-1995 VISITATION TRENDS, REGION 1**

PARK	1980	1985	1994	1995	CHANGE: 85-95	CHANGE: 94-95
Big Arm	23,400*	31,900*	33,964	27,183	-15%	-20%
Finley Pt.	26,000*	25,500*	24,338	15,830	-38%	-35%
Wayfarers	80,900*	75,600*	56,306	43,075	-43%	-23%
West Shore	21,000*	25,300*	24,869	29,154	+15%	+17%
W. H. Isl.	---	3,500	5,015	---	---	---
Yellow Bay	29,900*	28,100	16,075	18,940	-33%	+18%
Flathead L. Subtotal	181,200	189,900	160,568	134,182	-29%	-16%
L M Ronan	---	---	14,322	22,192	---	+55%
Logan	47,300*	17,200	27,606	21,982	+28%	-20%
Lone Pine	14,300*	11,900*	19,625	20,937	+76%	+7%
Thom. Falls	35,000	13,600	16,743	8,236	-39%	+51%
Whitefish	66,000*	55,300	20,188	22,592	-59%	+12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>343,800</b>	<b>287,900</b>	<b>259,052</b>	<b>230,121</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>-11%</b>

**NOTE:** The totals for each year are not necessarily directly comparable, because data for the same sites was not always available. For 1980 and 1985 data, an asterisk indicates the number came from FWP traffic counter data, from Memorial Day Weekend until September 30. Other 1980-85 data was derived from MDT feeder route analysis. For 1994 data, vehicle counts were from May 1 to September 30 for seasonal parks. Year-round parks were counted all year, or an extra 20% was added to account for the missing part of the season. Visits include both day use and camping. The 1995 numbers are as described earlier.

In the period from 1985 to 1995, a number of Region 1 parks also registered sharp declines in visitation. The Flathead Lake system, declined by 29% during this period, led by drops at Wayfarers (-43%) and Finley Point (-38%). Outside the Flathead system, declines were also noted at Whitefish Lake (-59%) and Thompson Falls (-39%). The most significant visitation increases during the 1985-95 period occurred at Lone Pine (76%) and Logan (+28%).

Between 1980 and 1995, 6 out of the 9 sites surveyed declined in visitation, with the largest drop occurring at Whitefish Lake, which fell from 66,000 to 22,592 visitors, a decline of 66%. Finley Point, Wayfarers, Yellow Bay, Logan, and Thompson Falls also experienced significant visitation declines during the 1980-95 period.

Region 1 is unusual in that it appears to have experienced significant, long-term visitation declines at a time when visitation to many Montana State Parks has increased. One possible explanation for this is the vulnerability of the region to trends in Canadian tourism, which has been down in recent years due to a poor exchange rate. According to a Region 1 campground visitation study, Canadian campers in Flathead Lake State Park declined 47% between 1993 and 1995. Other factors which may have contributed to the visitation decline in the region include the collapse of the Kokanee Salmon fishery in Flathead Lake, and a significant net loss of campsites due to the loss of the Elmo unit.

## **Region 2 (Missoula)**

Region 2 parks hosted an estimated 181,424 visits during the prime season in 1995 (see table VII-3). By a substantial margin, the most heavily visited park in the region was Frenchtown Pond (69,106 visits). Fort Owen and Council Grove were the least visited sites in the region 2 system, with 3,905 and 12,273 visits, respectively.

According to observational surveys taken at 4 parks in the region, 85% of the visitors were Montana residents, and 15% were non-residents. One reason for the high rate of Montana visitation (the highest of any region) are the large numbers of residents who visit Frenchtown Pond (94% Montana resident in 1995). Of the sites surveyed, Beavertail Hill had the lowest percentage of Montana visitors (32%).

Visitor counts at four out of six parks in the Missoula region increased between 1994 and 1995 (see table VII-4). Because there was no data available for Frenchtown Pond in 1994, the change in total Region 2 park visitation between 1994 and 1995 was not calculated. Even with the missing data, it seems likely that parks visitation in Region 2 increased during the last two years.



**TABLE VII-3**

**REGION 2 PARK VISITATION, 1995**

<b>PARK</b>	<b>TOTAL VEHICLES</b>	<b>TOTAL VISITS</b>	<b>AVERAGE VISITS PER DAY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED % MT RESIDENTS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED % NON-MT RESIDENTS</b>
Beavertail Hill	6,267	14,733	51	32%	68%
Council Grove	4,909	12,273	45	---	---
French. Pond	17,774	69,106	253	94%	6%
Fort Owen	1,562	3,905	14	---	---
Lost Creek	6,754	16,885	62	---	---
Placid (camp)	6,659	19,819	73	93%	7%
Placid (day)	2,924	7,310	---	---	---
Placid (total)	9,583	27,129	---	---	---
Salmon (camp)	7,490	18,725	---	---	---
Salmon (day)	6,091	18,668	---	90%	10%
Salmon (total)	13,581	37,393	---	---	---
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>60,430</b>	<b>181,424</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>15%</b>

**NOTE:** Estimates based on traffic counter readings taken May through September. Visits include both day use and camping. Average persons-per-vehicle figure for Region 2 parks was 3.0.

During the 1994-95 period, the largest percentage increases were at Fort Owen (+70%) and Placid Lake (+36%). Salmon Lake and Beavertail Hill posted modest declines during this period (-10% and -5%, respectively).

Region 2 visitation increased during the 1985-95 period (+4%). From 1985-95, the parks with the largest percentage increases were Council Grove (+123%) and Lost Creek (+58%). During this period, Placid and Salmon registered declines of 40% and 30%, respectively. The most notable change in visitation between 1980 and 1995 was at Frenchtown Pond, where annual visitation increased by 35,006 (103%).

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**TABLE VII-4**

**1980-1995 VISITATION TRENDS, REGION 2**

PARK	1980	1985	1994	1995	CHANGE: 85-95	CHANGE: 94-95
Beaver. Hill	9,900*	10,200	15,481	14,733	+44 %	-5 %
Counc. Gr.	---	5,500*	11,598	12,273	+123 %	+6 %
French. Pd.	34,100*	45,500	---	69,106	+52 %	---
Ft. Owen	4,200	4,100	2,293	3,905	-5 %	+70 %
Lost Cr.	12,500	10,700*	12,720	16,885	+58 %	+33 %
Placid	20,900	45,200	19,889	27,129	-40 %	+36 %
Salmon	25,100	53,400	41,689	37,393	-30 %	-10 %
<b>Total</b>	106,700	174,600	103,670	181,424	+4 %	---

NOTE: The totals for each year are not necessarily directly comparable, because data for the same sites was not always available. For 1980 and 1985 data, an asterisk indicates the number came from FWP traffic counter data, from Memorial Day Weekend until September 30. Other 1980-85 data were derived from MDT feeder route analysis. Data for 1994 were based on traffic counters (it is unclear whether the data reflects a full-season estimate, or just the prime season). Visits include both day use and camping. 1995 data is described earlier in the report.

### Region 3 (Bozeman)

Region 3 recorded 357,211 visits in 1995, the most of any region (see table VII-5). The parks with the most visits in the region were Hauser Lake (87,745) and Spring Meadow Lake (80,492). The least visited parks were Madison Buffalo Jump (15,512) and Elkhorn (27,144).

According to site surveys, 53% of the visitors were Montana residents and 47% were non-residents. Region 3--which encompasses two of the entrances to Yellowstone National Park--had the highest non-resident visitation percentage in the state. Within Region 3, Spring Meadow Lake and Hauser Lake had the highest percentage of Montana visitors, with 97% and 77%, respectively. The parks with the lowest resident visitation rates were Missouri Headwaters (34%) and Madison Buffalo Jump (40%).

In Region 3, only a few sites had comparable visitation data for the 1994-5 period (see table VII-6). Bannack posted an increase of 13%, while Lewis and Clark Caverns visitation increased by approximately 4%. The 1994 counts for Missouri Headwaters and Madison Buffalo Jump were uncharacteristically low.

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

**TABLE VII-5**

**REGION 3 PARK VISITATION, 1995**

<b>PARK</b>	<b>TOTAL VEHICLES</b>	<b>TOTAL VISITS</b>	<b>AVERAGE VISITS PER DAY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED % MT RESIDENTS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED % NON-MT RESIDENTS</b>
Bannack	9,818	29,069	80	57%	43%
Elkhorn	11,990	27,144	74	70%	30%
Hauser Lake	40,571	87,745	240	77%	23%
L&C Caverns	18,576	61,470	168	43%	57%
M. Buff. Jmp.	6,458	15,512	42	40%	60%
Headwaters	19,916	55,779	153	34%	66%
Sp. M. Lake	33,712	80,492	221	97%	3%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>141,041</b>	<b>357,211</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>

**NOTE:** Data collection began in April at Lewis and Clark Caverns, and May at the other sites. Collection continued through December. Caverns numbers based on cave tours; other data includes both day use and camping. Regional average persons-per-vehicle figure was 2.6.

Between 1985 and 1995, all sites where data was available posted sizeable increases, ranging from a low of 16% at Lewis and Clark Caverns to a high of 986% at Elkhorn (the size of this increase leads to suspicions of a miscount at this site). Spring Meadow Lake visits rose from 35,700 to 80,492 during this period, an increase of 125%. Overall, Regions 3 and 4 had the largest percentage increased in visitation between 1985 and 1995.

All Region 3 sites with comparable data also showed increases for the 1980 to 1995 period, with the most sizeable jump in visitation occurring at Hauser Lake, where visits went from 14,900 to 87,745. This increase is somewhat deceptive, however, as facilities at the site were not developed until 1981.



*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**TABLE VII-6**

**1980-1995 VISITATION TRENDS, REGION 3**

PARK	1980	1985	1994	1995	CHANGE: 85-95	CHANGE: 94-95
Bannack	22,000	19,400*	25,831	29,069	+50%	+13%
Elkhorn	---	2,500	---	27,144	+986%	---
Hauser L.	14,900	69,000	---	87,745	+27%	---
Caverns	56,000	53,000	59,390	61,470	+16%	+4%
M. Buf. Jp.	9,800*	8,900*	736	15,512	+74%	---
Headwaters	20,400	36,800	3,668	55,779	+52%	---
Sp. M. Lk.	---	35,700*	---	80,492	125%	---
Beav. Rock	---	1,100	---	---	---	---
<b>Total</b>	<b>123,100</b>	<b>226,400</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>357,211</b>	<b>+58%</b>	<b>---</b>

**NOTE:** The totals for each year are not necessarily directly comparable, because data for the same sites was not always available.

For 1980 and 1985 data, an asterisk indicates the number came from FWP traffic counter data, from Memorial Day Weekend until September 30. Other 1980-85 data was derived from MDT feeder route analysis.

The Lewis and Clark Caverns tallies for 1980 and 1985 were from May 1 to September 30. The 1980 count for the Lewis and Clark Caverns includes day use only; the 1985 tally includes both day use and camping visitation. Bannack figures for 1994 do not include camping.

For most 1994 data, it is unknown which numbers were based on actual counters, and which were calculated from indicator sites (Caverns data was based on cave tours). It is also not known whether the data reflects a full-season estimate, or just the prime season. An insufficient number of sites were available in 1994 to make a regional tally for that year meaningful. 1995 data was described earlier in the report. No change was calculated between 1994 and 1995 because of the gaps in the 1994 data. Because of the extreme disparity between 1994 and 1995 counts at Madison Buffalo Jump and Missouri Headwaters, no change was calculated for these two years.

### Region 4 (Great Falls)

Visitation data was available for two Region 4 state parks, totaling 302,275 visits (see table VII-7). Giant Springs--the most heavily visited state park in Montana, accounted for 292,958 of these visits.

According to observational surveys and fee envelope tallies, 70% of the visitors to Giant Springs in 1995 were residents. Even though resident visitation dominates at this site, the 30%

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**TABLE VII-7**  
**REGION 4 PARK VISITATION, 1995**

PARK	TOTAL VEHICLES	TOTAL VISITS	AVERAGE VISITS PER DAY	ESTIMATED % MT RESIDENTS	ESTIMATED % NON-MT RESIDENTS
Giant Springs	84,426	292,958	802	70%	30%
Ulm Pishkun	3,668	9,317	51	53%	47%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>88,094</b>	<b>302,275</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>31%</b>

**NOTE:** Giant Springs resident/non-resident visitation estimate was based on observational and fee envelope counts made in May, June, and July of 1995. Vehicle counts were made from May to December, and the total estimates corrected for the gaps in January-May. The estimate does not include walk-in or bike traffic, which is significant for Giant Springs, but for which there is no standardized method for estimating. Walk-in use is estimated to be approximately 10% of vehicle use. Ulm Pishkun is open to vehicular traffic for 6 months of the year. Although visitation continues into the winter months, there are no estimates of walk-in use during the closed season. Persons-per-vehicle figures for Giant Springs and Ulm Pishkun were 3.5 and 2.5, respectively.

non-resident visitation rate is notably higher than for other "urban" parks in the system such as Frenchtown Pond, Spring Meadow Lake, Lone Pine, and Lake Elmo. Non-resident visitation to Giant Springs may increase once the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center opens.

Surveys done in 1995 at Ulm Pishkun indicated visitation was 53% resident and 47% non-resident. Overall, an estimated 69% of the 1995 visitors to Giant Springs and Ulm Pishkun combined were Montana residents.

Between 1994 and 1995, estimated visitation at Giant Springs rose by 46% (see table VII-8). The other site with comparable data for 1994-95 was the Smith River, where the number of floaters increased by 28%, from 3,207 to 4,112. During this period, user days on the Smith rose from 13,444 to 17,412, an increase of 30%. While Smith River user days have increased significantly during the last 10 years, use tends to fluctuate dramatically depending on the quantity of water in a particular year.

Between 1985 and 1995, Giant Springs and Ulm Pishkun posted visitation increases of 74% and 79%, respectively. Floater numbers on the Smith River were much higher in 1995 than 1985, in part because 1985 was a low water year.

All Region 4 sites with visitation data also posted increases between 1980 and 1995. The largest percentage increase during this period was at Ulm Pishkun, where visitation jumped by 324%.

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

**TABLE VII-8**

**1980-1995 VISITATION TRENDS, REGION 4**

PARK	1980	1985	1994	1995	CHANGE: 85-95	CHANGE: 94-95
Giant Spr.	171,100*	168,400*	200,000	292,958	+74%	+46%
Ulm Pish.	2,200	5,200	---	9,317	+79%	---
Sl. Boxes	2,200	1,500	---	---	---	---
Smith R. (# of floaters)	---	854	3,207	4,112	+381%	+28%
Ackley L.	7,800*	11,600	---	---	---	---
<b>Total</b>	<b>183,300</b>	<b>187,554</b>	<b>203,207</b>	<b>306,387</b>	<b>+63%</b>	<b>+51%</b>

**NOTE:** The totals for each year are not necessarily directly comparable, because data for the same sites was not always available. For 1980 and 1985 data, an asterisk indicates the number came from FWP traffic counter data, from Memorial Day Weekend until September 30. Other 1980-85 data was derived from MDT feeder route analysis. Figures include both camping and day use. 1994 visitation for Giant Springs is an estimate with a range of plus or minus 25,000. 1995 visitation is described earlier in the report.

### Region 5 (Billings)

Region 5 parks recorded 246,034 visits in 1995, the third most in the state (see table VII-9). The most heavily visited park was Cooney Reservoir (128,968 visits), with more than half of the regional total. The least-visited park in the region in 1995 was Greycliff Prairie Dog Town, with 16,244 visits.

Overall, visitation in the region was 79% resident and 21% non-resident. Parks with the highest percentage of resident visitation included Lake Elmo and Cooney, with 97% and 96%, respectively. Prairie Dog Town (25%) and Pictograph Cave (36%) had the lowest resident visitation percentages in the region in 1995.

All Region 5 parks except Cooney experienced visitation increases between 1994 and 1995 (see table VII-10).

From 1994 to 1995, both Pictograph Cave and Greycliff Prairie Dog Town experienced increases of more than 100%. Cooney visitation declined by 43% during this period (1995 was a high



*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

**TABLE VII-9**

**REGION 5 PARK VISITATION, 1995**

PARK	TOTAL VEHICLES	TOTAL VISITS	AVERAGE VISITS PER DAY	ESTIMATED % MT RESIDENTS	ESTIMATED % NON-MT RESIDENTS
Cooney Res.	39,147	128,963	353	96%	4%
Lake Elmo	17,071	54,979	151	97%	3%
Picto. Cave	7,454	22,408	61	36%	64%
Plenty Coups	6,469	23,440	64	66%	34%
Prairie Dog T.	7,116	16,244	45	25%	75%
<b>Region Total</b>	<b>77,257</b>	<b>246,034</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>21%</b>

NOTE: Data collection started in May or June, and ran through December (except at Pictograph Caves, where counts ended in October). Figures include both camping and day use. Regional average persons-per-vehicle figure was 3.2.

**TABLE VII-10**

**1980-1995 VISITATION TRENDS, REGION 5**

PARK	1980	1985	1994	1995	CHANGE: 85-95	CHANGE: 94-95
Cooney R.	182,700*	122,900*	226,770	128,963	+5%	-43%
L. Elmo	---	21,300	34,115	54,979	+158%	+61%
Picto. Cave	26,700*	---	10,000	22,408	---	+124%
Pl. Coups	8,300*	32,700*	12,000	23,440	-28%	+95%
Pr. Dog T.	---	10,400	8,000	16,244	+56%	+103%
<b>Total</b>	<b>217,700</b>	<b>187,300</b>	<b>290,885</b>	<b>246,034</b>	<b>+31%</b>	<b>-15%</b>

NOTE: The totals for each year are not necessarily directly comparable, because data for the same sites was not always available. Figures include both camping and day use. For 1980 and 1985 data, an asterisk indicates the number came from FWP traffic counter data, from Memorial Day Weekend until September 30. Other 1980-85 data was derived from MDT feeder route analysis (except for Lake Elmo, which was based on day use ticket sales). 1994 data for Cooney was projected for 12 months. 1995 data collection is described earlier in the report.

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

water year in the reservoir, with significant flooding). Because of the declines at Cooney, overall park visitation in the region declined by 15% from 1994 to 1995.

With the exception of Chief Plenty Coups, all parks in the regions with comparable data between 1985 and 1995 showed increased visitation during this period. The most significant increase was at Lake Elmo, where visitation rose by 158%; one explanation for this increase is that recent improvements have made this a significantly more desirable site to visit.

Region 5 parks with visitation data going back to 1980 have shown significant fluctuations in visitation. Visitation at Cooney, in particular, has shown major ups and downs, probably because of variations in weather, water levels, and the quality of fishing in any given year.

**Region 7 (Miles City)**

Visitation at Makoshika in 1995 was 40,737 in 1995 (see table VII-11). Observational surveys indicated that 66% of the visitors were Montana residents, while 34% were non-residents. Makoshika was the only Region 7 park for which data was submitted in 1995.

**TABLE VII-11**  
**REGION 7 PARK VISITATION, 1995**

<b>PARK</b>	<b>TOTAL VEHICLES</b>	<b>TOTAL VISITS</b>	<b>AVERAGE VISITS PER DAY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED % MT RESIDENTS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED % NON-MT RESIDENTS</b>
Makoshika	17,712	40,737	166	66%	34%

NOTE: Numbers based on traffic count data from May through December. Visitation includes both day use and camping. Persons-per-vehicle ratio used was 2.3.

Between 1994 and 1995, Makoshika visitation dropped by 12%, possibly due to construction (see table VII-12). From 1980 to 1995, Makoshika visitation has held relatively stable, ranging between 40,000 and 50,000 during the years examined here.

Available data for other parks in the region (e.g., Hell Creek and Tongue River Reservoir) suggests significant annual fluctuations. While extreme fluctuations may suggest counter problems, reservoir visitation can be powerfully influenced by variations in water levels and fishing success.

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)

**TABLE VII-12**  
**1980-1995 VISITATION TRENDS, REGION 7**

PARK	1980	1985	1994	1995	CHANGE: 85-95	CHANGE: 94-95
Makoshika	45,000*	40,400*	46,409	40,737	+1%	-12%
Tongue R.	---	50,900	27,195	---	---	---
Hell Cr.	43,300	15,700	2,865	---	---	---
Rosebud B.	5,300*	3,500	1,634	---	---	---
Pirogue Is.	---	1,700	3,819	---	---	---
Med. Rocks	9,300*	12,300*	6,881	---	---	---
<b>Total</b>	102,900	124,500	88,803	---	---	---

NOTE: The totals for each year are not necessarily directly comparable, because data for the same sites was not always available. Numbers include both day use and camping visitation. For 1980 and 1985 data, an asterisk indicates the number came from FWP traffic counter data, from Memorial Day Weekend until September 30. Other 1980-85 data was derived from MDT feeder route analysis. 1994 data derived from car counters, except for Rosebud Battlefield and Pirogue Island; these sites were based on previous counts, compounded by 3% per year. 1995 data is explained earlier in the report. Extreme variations in Hell Creek numbers make this data suspect.

### State-wide Park Visitation

Visitor counts for the 28 park units for which data is available in 1995 total 1,357,792 visits (see table VII-13). This figure includes prime season counts and estimates, as well as off-season counts for some (but not all) of the sites with longer seasons. For most sites, shoulder and off-season visitation is a relatively small percentage of the seasonal total.

**TABLE VII-13**  
**STATE-WIDE VISITATION TOTALS**  
**FROM 28 MONTANA STATE PARK UNITS IN 1995**

PARK	TOTAL VEHICLES	TOTAL VISITS	AVERAGE VISITS PER DAY	ESTIMATED % MT RESIDENTS	ESTIMATED % NON-MT RESIDENTS
<b>Statewide</b>	474,995	1,357,792	3,720	66%	34%

NOTE: Totals include data from the 28 parks for which visitation information was available in 1995.



*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

In order to try to make the estimate more complete, the most recent available visitation counts for park sites with no 1995 information were added to the totals, resulting in a revised count of 1,435,823 visits.

In order to account for off-season visitation not included in 1995 counts, increased visitation at sites with old counts, and two lightly-visited sites with no available count information, a range of percentages between 5% and 20% were applied and added to the estimated total.

This resulted in a series of system-wide estimates ranging from 1,507,614 to 1,722,988 visits. Based on this information, a reasonable estimate of total 1995 visitation to the 41 Montana State Parks is approximately 1.6 million.

This figure is 500,000 less than the 2.1 million estimate used during the early 1990s. The most likely explanation for this is that the earlier estimate relied more on older projections than actual traffic counts, and had not yet fully accounted for the impacts of system downsizing on overall visitation. While visitation at specific sites has generally increased during the last decade, the loss of what was previously one of the most heavily visited state parks in the system--Canyon Ferry--has meant that system-wide visitation has probably declined since management of that site was turned over to the Bureau of Reclamation.

According to the 1993 Canyon Ferry Management Plan, estimated total visitation at Canyon Ferry was 600,000 in 1986, the last year a formal traffic counter program was in place (Shouse and Bay 1993). According to the Plan, the Canyon Ferry traffic counts were later considered to be too high. In order to establish a more accurate baseline for the Plan, the researchers looked at three estimates for 1989 which ranged from 100,000 to 300,000; a figure of approximately 206,000 visitors was selected as the most accurate estimate. It is worth noting that this estimate is for a year with low water levels, relatively poor fishing, and follows the introduction of entrance fees.

Whichever Canyon Ferry visitation figures are considered to be the most accurate, it is likely that loss of this park--combined with the loss of a number of less heavily visited sites (e.g., Elmo, Holter Lake, Bears Paw Battlefield, et al.) during the last 10 years--has reduced overall visitation enough to offset increases at many of the specific sites during this period. Because the configuration of the system has changed so dramatically, changes in total visitation are not a very meaningful indicator of trends. A more useful figure is a comparison between changes in visitation at sites for which data is available for the same time period (see next section). If and when the number of sites becomes stable for a period of time, the total visitation figure will become more meaningful.

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

## **State Park Visitation Trends: 1980-1995**

In order to obtain a better understanding of long-term state park visitation trends, an analysis was done for 31 sites which had comparable data for 1985 and 1995. Another comparison was done for 26 sites with comparable visitation data for 1980 and 1994.

For the 1985-95 period, visitation at the 31 sites increased by 21% overall, with an average annual increase of 1.9% (see table VII-14). The largest increases were in Region 4 (76%) and Region 3 (59%). The indicator sites in Region 1 registered the only regional decrease in the state (-27%), while visitation in Region 7 held constant.

**TABLE VII-14**

### **STATE PARK VISITATION TRENDS: A COMPARISON OF INDICATOR SITES FOR 1980-94 AND 1985-95**

<b>REGION</b>	<b>1980-1994 (# OF VISITORS)</b>	<b>1985-95 (# OF VISITORS)</b>	<b>% CHANGE: 1980-1994</b>	<b>% CHANGE: 1985-1995</b>
<b>Region 1</b>	343,800--239,714	284,400---207,929	-30%	-27%
<b>Region 2</b>	72,600---92,072	174,600---181,424	+27%	+4%
<b>Region 3</b>	108,200---89,625	225,300---357,211	-17%	+59%
<b>Region 4</b>	171,100--200,000	174,454----306,387	+17%	+76%
<b>Region 5</b>	217,700--248,770	187,300----223,626	+14%	+19%
<b>Region 7</b>	102,900---57,789	40,400-----40,337	-44%	0%
<b>Statewide Changes</b>	1,016,300-927,970	1,086,454-1,316,914	-9%	+21%

NOTE: The analysis above included 31 state park indicator sites for the 1985-95 period, and 26 sites for the 1980-94 period. Visitation totals between the two study periods are not comparable because different sets of indicators were sometimes used. Indicator sites used in each region included the following: **REGION 1:** Region 1 sites used for both the 1980-94 and 1985-95 comparisons included Big Arm, Finley Point, Wayfarers, West Shore, Yellow Bay, Logan, Lone Pine, Thompson Falls, and Whitefish. **REGION 2:** Region 2 sites used for the 1980-94 comparison included Beavertail Hill, Fort Own, Lost Creek, Placid, and Salmon. Sites used for the 1985-95 comparison included all of the above, plus Council Grove and Frenchtown Pond. **REGION 3:** Region 3 sites used for the 1980-94 comparison included Bannack, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Madison Buffalo Jump, and Missouri Headwaters. Sites used for the 1985-95 comparison included all of the above, plus Elkhorn, Hauser Lake, and Spring Meadow Lake. **REGION 4:** Only one Region 4 indicator (Giant Springs) was available to compare the 1980-94 period. Sites used for the 1985-95 comparison included Giant Springs, Ulm Pishkun, and the Smith River. **REGION 5:** Indicator sites used for the 1980-94 period included Cooney, Pictograph Cave, and Chief Plenty Coups. Sites used for the 1985-95 comparison included Cooney, Lake Elmo, Chief Plenty Coups, and Greycliff Prairie Dog Town. **REGION 7:** Indicator sites used for the 1980-94 period included Makoshika, Hell Creek, Rosebud, and Medicine Rocks. The only site with available data for the 1985-95 comparison was Makoshika.

*Chapter VII: Visitation Trends and Satisfaction Measures*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

A comparison of 26 indicator sites for which 1980-94 visitation data was available suggested a general decline of 9%. Visitation in Regions 7, 1, and 3 declined during this period (-44%, -30%, and -17% respectively). The most significant increases during this period were in Region 2 (+27%) and Region 4 (+17%).

It is difficult to explain with certainty why the overall visitation trends for the two periods were not more similar. One factor is that a different selection of sites was used; the 1980-94 period relied on fewer indicator sites and provides a less complete picture. In addition, 1994 figures relied more on estimates (rather than actual counts), and as a result may be less accurate than the 1995 numbers. Another factor is that the 1980-94 comparison did not include Frenchtown Pond, Spring Meadow Lake, and Lake Elmo, popular urban parks where visitation growth has generally increased more rapidly than for the system as a whole. Finally, visitation in any particular year or part of the state can be significantly above or below general trends depending on a number of forces such as weather, gas prices, Canadian--U.S. exchange rates, and other factors.

Consequently, a more accurate look at visitation trends would require data from a greater number of years, reducing the chance that anomalous years will skew the results.

### **Resident/Non-Resident State Park Visitation Trends: 1985-1995**

According to observational surveys done around the state during the 1995 season, approximately 66% of park visitors were Montana residents, and 34% were non-residents (see table VII-15). In spite of steadily increasing numbers of tourists to Montana, available estimates suggest that the trend is toward an increasing percentage of resident visitors to Montana State Parks.

The relatively low resident visitation during the late 1980s may, at least in part, reflect the difficulty the Parks Division was having adequately maintaining its facilities. The increase in resident visitation since then may reflect an awareness among residents that park facilities and maintenance have improved. Another factor may be the rapid increases in visitation growth at the urban parks in the system, which are mainly used by residents.

According to a 1993 survey conducted by the University of Montana, 11% of summer non-resident visitors to Montana stopped at a state park (ITRR 1994). Of the summer non-resident visitors surveyed, 71% were vacationers, 15% percent of whom visited a state park. Other summer non-resident visitors (e.g., business travelers, through travelers, etc.) constituted 29% of the total; only 1% of these visitors stopped at a Montana State Park.



**TABLE VII-15**

**TRENDS IN RESIDENT/NON-RESIDENT VISITATION:  
MONTANA STATE PARKS: 1985-1995**

YEAR	% MT RESIDENTS	% NON-MT RESIDENTS
1985	52%	48%
1986	58%	42%
1987	49%	51%
1988	49%	51%
1992	60%	40%
1995	66%	34%

NOTE: Methods used to calculate resident/non-resident visitation rates have varied from year to year.

The survey found that, on average, summer non-resident visitors to Montana State Parks stayed one night longer in the state than did other non-resident travelers. Average daily expenditures were similar for all summer non-resident visitors, but because state park visitors stayed longer, their overall expenditures in Montana were higher.

In general, non-resident state park visitors were much more likely to participate in nature-based and historical activities than other non-resident visitors to the state.

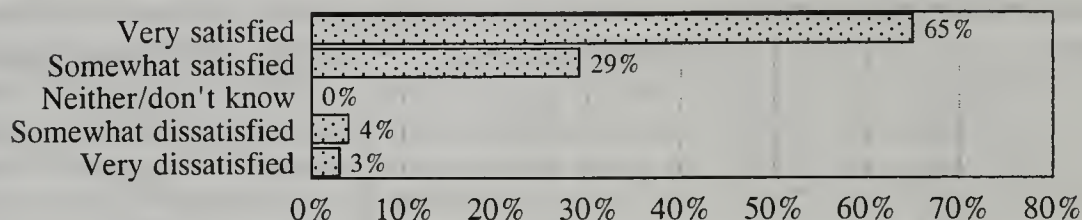
**Selected State Park Satisfaction Measures**

Increasing visitation levels may imply satisfaction with Montana's State Parks, but what do people actually say about the kinds of experiences they are having?

Recent surveys indicate that both Montanans and out-of-state visitors have high levels of satisfaction with the Montana State Park Program. This does not imply that there are not important areas where improvements can be made--or that Montanans want their state park system to remain exactly as it is now--but it does suggest that overall, the system seems to be meeting the needs of most visitors reasonably well (see figures VII-1 through VII-8).

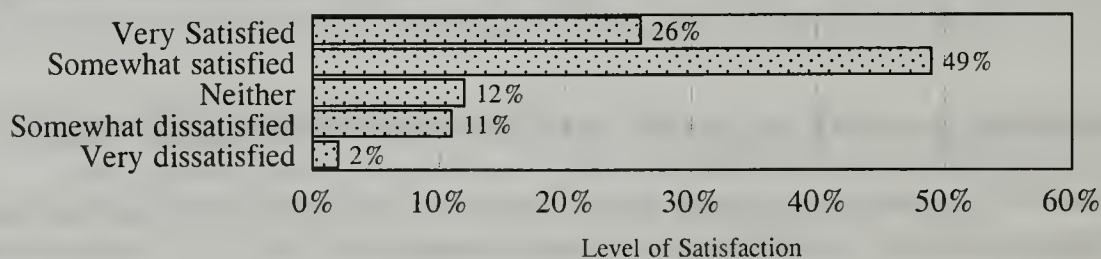
**FIGURE VII-1**

**STATE PARK VISITOR SATISFACTION**  
 (mailout survey respondents who visited a State Park within two years)



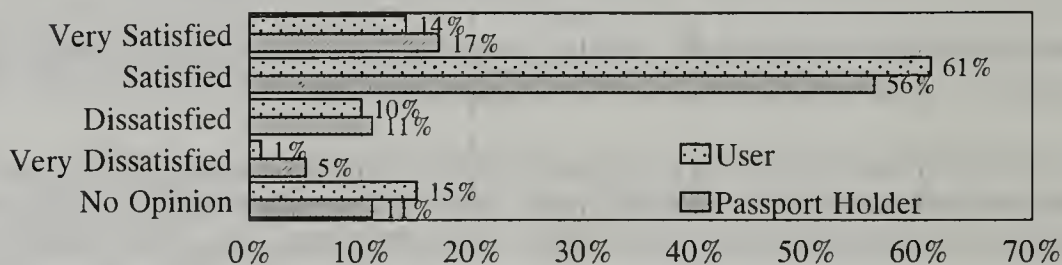
**FIGURE VII-2**

**SATISFACTION WITH TYPES OF STATE PARK FACILITIES**  
 (State Park Passport Holders)



**FIGURE VII-3**

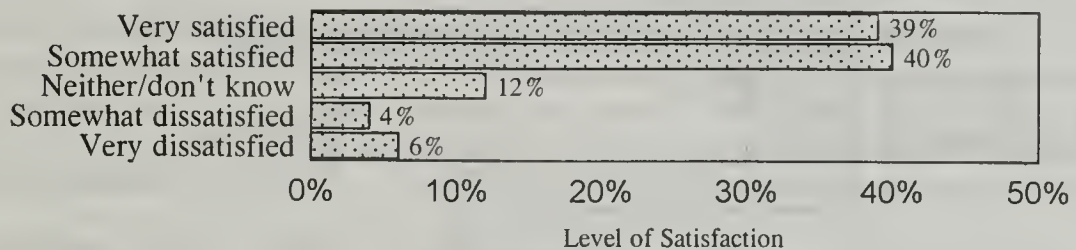
**SATISFACTION WITH MAINTENANCE OF STATE PARKS**  
 (mailout survey)



(FWP 1998)

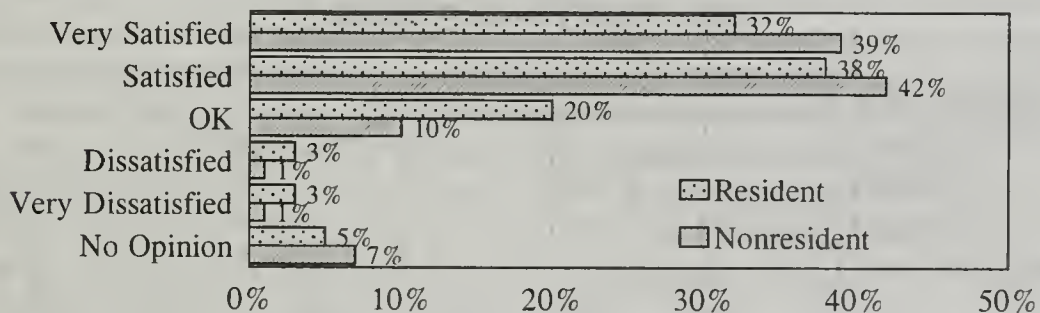
**FIGURE VII-4**

**PROTECTING AND ENHANCING CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND  
 NATURAL RESOURCES IN STATE PARKS  
 (Montana Residents)**



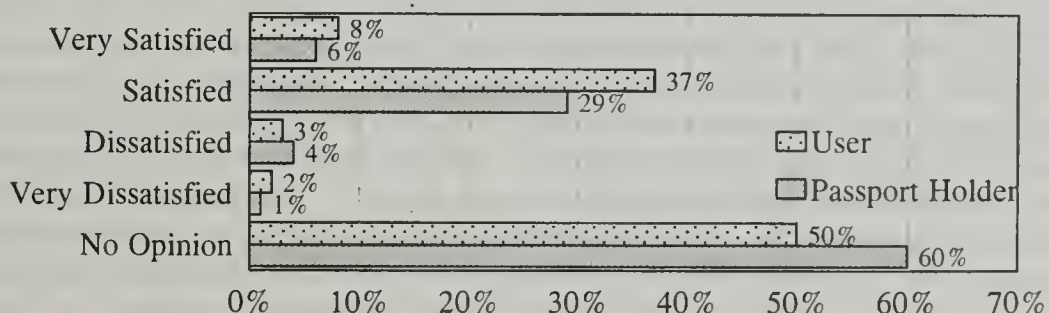
**FIGURE VII-5**

**SATISFACTION WITH LEVEL OF STAFF PROFESSIONALISM  
 (onsite survey)**



**FIGURE VII-6**

**SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATION/INTERPRETATION  
 (mailout survey)**

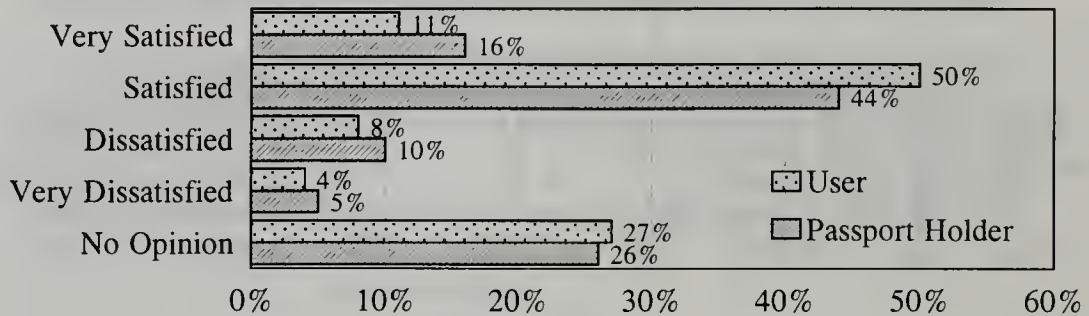


(FWP 1998)



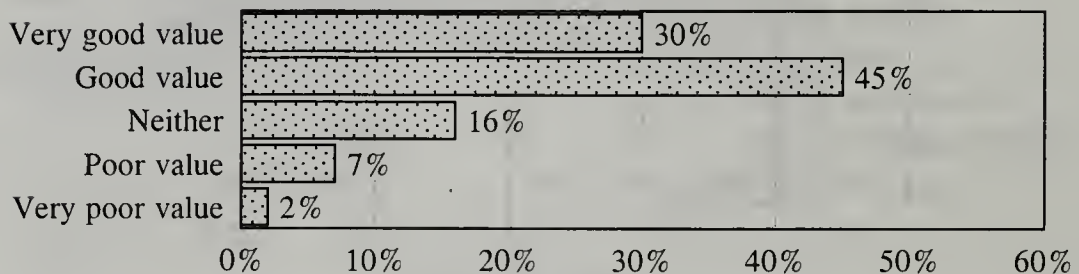
**FIGURE VII-7**

**SATISFACTION WITH ENFORCEMENT OF RULES/REGULATIONS**  
**(mailout survey)**



**FIGURE VII-8**

**VALUE OF FACILITY FEES PAID**  
**(State Park Passport Holders)**



(FWP 1998)

## VIII ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR MONTANA'S STATE PARK SYSTEM

### External Forces with Potential to Affect Montana State Parks

Based on the trends discussed earlier and other information, a number of key external forces have been identified with the potential to have important long-term affects on Montana's State Parks, as listed and discussed below. Because the direction these forces take is difficult to predict, the recommendations in the Plan must be relevant and workable across a spectrum of possible scenarios.

**\* POPULATION GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:** A growing population in Montana is likely to increase demand for parks and outdoor recreation, assuming other factors remain constant. Conversely, the development which results from population increases often makes it more difficult and expensive to secure additional facilities. Existing public land will be more crowded, as more people use a relatively constant public resource base, and access to private land decreases (e.g., large tracts of Plum Creek Timber land in western Montana which formerly was open to public use is in the process of being sold to developers). Additionally, public sites experiencing increasingly heavy use are likely to be more difficult to maintain and protect. Current forecasts indicate that Montana's population will continue to grow during the next 10 years, although not as rapidly as in the first half of the 1990s. In addition to increasing demand for recreation sites, population growth may also change the nature of demand (e.g., residents moving to Montana from other states may desire recreation sites which mirror more closely those they are used to in their home states).

**\* CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE AND LOCATION OF THE POPULATION:** The population in the United States is becoming increasingly older, and more ethnically and racially diverse. Single-parent households have become much more predominate during the last thirty years, and a much higher percentage of women are in the workforce. Although Montana has managed to retain much of its rural character, the population of the country as a whole has become increasingly more urban and detached from rural and natural settings. As urban areas have grown, they have tended to concentrate poverty, sometimes limiting access to outdoor recreational opportunities. In Montana, much of the population growth during the past few decades has occurred in the western third of the state, where the most important urban centers have experienced rapid growth. A number of rural counties in eastern Montana, by contrast, have lost population. Demand for recreation opportunities near Montana's urban centers is almost certain to increase as long as growth continues. As the population becomes more urbanized, demands for certain types of recreation are likely to change, with possibly less demand for "traditional" Montana outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing.

*Chapter VIII: Alternative Futures for Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* **TOURISM:** Montana is currently hosting approximately 8 million out-of-state visitors per year, a dramatic increase from 10 years ago. Many of Montana's tourists visit state and national parks, and participate in other outdoor recreation activities; there is growing recognition that federal and state resource managers are integral components of the Montana's tourist industry. Current forecasts call for the number of Montana tourists to continue increasing, although not as rapidly as in the recent past. In recent years, the state tourism organization (Travel Montana), has placed more emphasis on promoting eastern Montana as a travel destination, with some success. In Western Montana, conversely, there has been growing concern about continued growth in the number of tourists, and the impact they may be having on resources, infrastructure, and recreational opportunities. In coordination with a wide range of tourism industry interests, Travel Montana recently adopted a five year plan (1998-2002) for Montana tourism and travel, which addresses these and other issues.

\* **POLITICS, GOVERNMENT BUDGETS, AND AGENCY STAFFING LEVELS:**

Legislative appropriations and support for staffing needs profoundly shape the quality of the state park system. Beyond the state level, federal government budget and staffing levels have an impact on federal lands management, which could impact the state park system. If budget problems result in a shortened season at popular federal sites, for example, the result could be more pressure on state parks. Similarly, there could be more pressure to take over management of some federal sites. The current fiscally-conservative political mood at both the federal and state level makes it difficult to secure funding and staffing for new projects. During each legislative session, there are attempts to divert or eliminate state park funding sources. Two likely implications are an increasing reliance on both volunteers and the "user pay" principle.

\* **CHANGES IN OUTDOOR RECREATION TECHNOLOGY AND USE PATTERNS:**

The rate of technological change and innovation is increasing. The rapidity with which mountain bikes and rollerblades have become popular trail uses, for example, are an example of how quickly use patterns can change. Motorized types of recreation such as ATVs, snowmobiles, and jet skis have become increasingly more prominent during the past two decades, increasing conflicts between different types of recreationists. In campgrounds in Montana and throughout the rest of the country, the percentage of tents has declined as recreational vehicles (RVs) have become more popular. A significant and on-going change in use patterns is an increase in certain types of "shoulder" and off-season recreation, which has implications for staff scheduling and other areas of operation. Park managers must be in a position to react with increasing speed to monitor new trends, evaluate their impacts on the resources they manage, and adapt management accordingly.



*Chapter VIII: Alternative Futures for Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* **SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES:** Changes in values, culture, and society have an impact on the recreational preferences of Americans and--ultimately--park managing agencies. Shifting attitudes about the role of women in society, for example, have resulted in an explosion of female participation in activities where they were rare twenty years ago. The percentage of single parent families has increased during the past few decades, changing recreation patterns. Changing attitudes about government influence elections, agency budgets, and policy. Because technological and socio-cultural changes can occur quickly, and interact together in ways that are difficult to predict, the only certainty is that demands on state park use will change over time.

\* **ECONOMIC CHANGES:** Major Montana and U.S. economic changes will affect outdoor recreation in general and state park use in particular, in addition to having an impact on agency budgets. Dramatic rises in fuel prices, for example, would likely reduce the number of tourists visiting the state, and provide a disincentive for residents to travel long distances to use parks. A prolonged recession could reduce purchases of outdoor recreation equipment, affecting recreation patterns in Montana. Conversely, a healthy economy would likely generate a somewhat different set of effects on state parks.

### **Strategic Alternatives for Montana State Parks**

Listed below are some of the major strategic alternatives facing the park system, each having the potential to be powerfully shaped by the external forces described above. Each set of choices can be framed as a kind of continuum. In addition, all the alternatives affect each other; moving in a particular direction in one area may shape choices in another. Taken together, they suggest some of the trade-offs which might present themselves under the variety of changing conditions which will unfold during the next 20-25 years.

Given expected conditions, limited resources, and public desires, the anticipated paths are identified in *italics and underlined*; if circumstances change, another option may emerge as being more desirable. These alternatives are intended to sketch out a general, long-term direction for the park system, without going into the specifics which are discussed elsewhere in the Plan. In most instances, the paths outlined here do not represent major departures from what is presently in place.

*Chapter VIII: Alternative Futures for Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

\* **ACQUISITIONS:**

- + Aggressively Search for New Acquisition Opportunities
- + Retain All of Current Land Base, with Option of Adding Carefully Selected Inholdings, Buffer Zones, Top-Priority New Acquisitions, or Unanticipated but High Quality New Opportunities
- + Maintain All of Current Land Base, with No Expansion (except for selected inholdings, adjacent parcels, or trades)
- + Significant Reduction in System Size and Scope

In the early 1990s, the Parks Program was in the process of completing a major downsizing of the park system, which was one way of addressing a long-standing budget crisis. Since then, the size of the system has remained relatively constant, with significant funding being directed at operations, maintenance, and selected capital improvements. Funding and political support for major new acquisitions are currently not available, and probably will not emerge in the near future unless there is an unusual opportunity to save a significant resource, a substantial new funding source is developed, or a major funding partner steps forward for a particular project. It would not be prudent to take on significant new sites without secure funding sources and adequate staffing to operate and maintain them. Sound maintenance and the acquisition of inholdings and key adjacent parcels are expected to remain higher priorities than large-scale land acquisition into the twenty-first century.

However, if Montana's population and out-of-state visitation continue to increase as expected--along with participation in various outdoor recreation activities--support may grow for the acquisition of high-priority sites in order to help disperse use and/or preserve important resources. Currently, state parks in urban areas receive the heaviest use; there are likely to be growing demands for additional recreation facilities adjacent to the cities where most Montanans live. Over the years there has been much discussion about whether urban sites such as Giant Springs, Spring Meadow, and Lake Elmo should be state parks, but they have become integral units in the system and are beginning to receive more statewide visitation.

Another factor which could influence the extent to which the Parks Program becomes involved in new parks or activities are the budget and staff reductions in the Forest Service, which will likely reduce that agency's ability to acquire additional pieces of property with high recreation or resource values, or even manage and maintain what they currently have (e.g., Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls). There are likely to be additional opportunities to work cooperatively with other agencies in managing various recreation sites throughout Montana. In some cases, these might be situations where another agency or organization (e.g., the Montana Power Company) owns the property, but it is managed as a state park or other type of site by FWP.

*Chapter VIII: Alternative Futures for Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

This plan contains a list of potential new state park sites in the “Potential Park System Gaps” section, but exceptional opportunities sometimes emerge quickly and unexpectedly, and it is impossible to accurately predict the possibilities that may present themselves in the next two decades. In addition to parks specifically in or around urban areas, some of the types of opportunities which may generate support in the future include the following: rail trails; historical trails; recreational river corridors; a park dealing with agricultural history in eastern Montana; parks preserving historical resources that have not been protected by other agencies; and larger, low-maintenance parks such as Sluice Boxes that offer more of a backcountry recreational experience, while preserving important resources that otherwise might be lost. Additional park sites oriented around high-demand water recreation areas (e.g., Flathead Lake) are also possibilities. Other specific long-term prospects includes Virginia and Nevada Cities. Although these became public sites outside the state park system, there remains a possibility that at some point in the future there will be interest in making them designated state parks.

The most realistic scenario for approximately the next five years is retaining the current land base and working to obtain key inholdings and important adjacent parcels, with the potential of adding one or more carefully selected new sites where there is political and public support. Land trades or selling surplus property would be one means of accomplishing this. However, given the number of parks turned over to other managers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, further significant reductions in the system's land base would be a serious consideration only in the event of catastrophic funding shortfalls. Ultimately, funding, political and public support, and the availability of important resources will shape the extent to which the Department adds to the State Park System. Parks program staff need to be proactive in laying out for political decision-makers and the public what the opportunities and alternatives are, but the system will to a large extent be driven by the collective vision Montanans have for it.

Aside from the fee title acquisition or leasing of new parkland, conservation or recreational easements may play a more important role in the future. Along with these tools, there may be additional opportunities for defining park units more on the basis of management practices than actual land base, as is currently the case in the Smith River corridor.

**\* DEVELOPMENT:**

- + Significant Amounts of New Development Throughout the System
- + Maintain Current System of Facilities, with Carefully Selected New Development
- + Maintain Current System, with Little or No New Development
- + Temporarily or Permanently Close Selected Facilities



*Chapter VIII: Alternative Futures for Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Beyond the significant projects currently in the works (e.g., Ulm Pishkun Visitor Center, Spring Meadow Nature Center), a substantial amount of major new development in the park system is not anticipated during the next twenty years. There is currently neither widespread public support nor funding for the kind of highly developed state park systems found in a number of other states around the country. There is a strong tradition of primitive recreation in Montana. In some cases, simply providing access and open space may be all that is required.

On the other hand, public input during the planning process indicates that Montanans and out-of-state visitors seem to want a balanced state park system, which retains a rustic character in some units, while offering a broader array of facilities in others. A rapidly growing elderly population will increase the demand for certain types of facilities. Ultimately, not every Montana State Park can offer everything to everyone, but the system as a whole is large enough so that it can meet a diversity of interests.

In the larger network of outdoor recreation providers in Montana, the overall niche of the state park system will likely remain in the large middle ground between more primitive USFS and BLM sites, and the much more developed facilities offered by the private sector. At either end of this spectrum, there will necessarily be a degree of overlap with other providers. There is also likely to be some overlap with the kinds of services and opportunities provided by local city and county park systems (e.g., childrens' play areas), as demand for these types of sites will likely continue to grow. At urban sites--as well as in other units in the system--there will likely be increased emphasis on cooperative types of development.

The anticipated course of action is to support the existing system at the current maintenance standard or better, protect resources, selectively improve visitor services, maintain public and employee safety, and enhance the system with carefully chosen new capital projects and on-going rehabilitation. The types of development which occur will, to a certain extent, be shaped by the changing character of the users (e.g., more visits by the elderly, single-parent families, etc.). The options of no new development or closing facilities would likely be opposed by the majority of the public, but would be driven by extreme budget shortfalls.

**\* MEETING RECREATIONAL NEEDS:**

- +Move Aggressively to Meet New Recreational Demands
- +Modest, Incremental Change to Meet Some New Needs, as Appropriate
- + Focus Mainly on Traditional Types of Uses--Little Response to Changing Demands

*Chapter VIII: Alternative Futures for Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The Montana State Park system does not have to meet every new recreational demand; there are other public and private sector providers who are better positioned to meet certain types of new needs. As recreational technology continues to change more quickly, however, there is likely to be more pressure to adapt the system to new activities. Conversely, a situation might arise where some types of current uses may no longer be appropriate. In the face of increasing change, the policy of the Parks Program has been gradual, incremental change to meet selected new needs. This approach is likely to continue.

Accommodating new demands should be seriously considered when resources can be protected, funding and staffing are available, and conflicts between visitors are minimal. Because of the wide range of park types, potential new uses at parks need to be considered on a site-by-site basis, assuming they are compatible with the goals of the system as a whole. An exclusive, system-wide focus on traditional park uses is not a responsible way to respond to the needs of an increasingly divergent park-using population (although severe budget constraints would significantly limit the Program's ability to adapt facilities or management for new uses). However, in order to provide for a rich diversity of experiences within the park system, some parks will likely continue to serve mainly traditional uses. In fact, there may be a role for more parks offering truly primitive experiences, such as Sluice Boxes and Wildhorse Island.

Growing numbers of senior citizens, minority visitors, and foreign tourists will also place new demands on Montana State Parks. Additionally, meeting the recreational needs of families will continue to be a focus, while more attention needs to be directed at ensuring that low-income Montanans have adequate access to a range of outdoor recreational activities close to home. Reduced rates for low-income visitors, more disabled-accessible facilities, additional urban parks, the provision of playgrounds and other facilities for children, and experimenting with foreign language information materials are some avenues for approaching these issues. As mentioned in the next section, interpretation and education (which can be considered recreational activities) are expected to assume a higher profile in Montana State Parks.

Another idea which would begin to meet some of the needs discussed above is offering outdoor equipment rental at selected sites. The rental of camping equipment, for example, would give people who have never camped a low-cost opportunity to see if they like it. Additionally, alternative types of accommodation such as yurts or tepees have become popular in park systems in other states, and may be worth examining at some Montana State Parks. The construction of the camping cabins at Lewis and Clark Caverns was an initial step in the direction of providing alternatives for visitors who want to stay overnight but don't want to camp.

*Chapter VIII: Alternative Futures for Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**\* PARKS PROGRAMS AND STAFFING:**

- +Significant New Program Development and Staffing Increases
- +*Stable FTE Levels or Gradual Increases, with Incremental Adjustments to Programs and Increased Cooperative Efforts Across Divisions, Between Agencies, and with the Private Sector*
- +Scale Back Existing Programs/Reduce Staffing

Given present funding and political trends, maintaining something resembling the current mix of programs and staffing is the most likely option for the next several years; beyond that, potential economic and political changes make predictions very difficult. The large-scale reduction or elimination of programs would not be an option unless driven by severe budget cuts, although the internal transfer of program responsibility and staff from one part of the agency to another is always a possibility.

Some areas where there may be opportunities for greater involvement include the following: interpretation and education (especially for youth); water-based recreation management and planning; more focus on family opportunities; additional support for the non-motorized Trails Program (e.g., rails-to-trails); assistance with the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial; and possible future involvement with Virginia and Nevada Cities.

Current demands on existing Parks Division FTE are high, with too few people available to do the necessary work. Comparisons with the National Park Service and other state park systems indicate that Montana's staff-per-visitor ratio is low, limiting the amount of visitor services which can be provided. Barring a major reduction in the size of the park system, the need for more FTE is likely to remain across many potential scenarios. However, substantial new staff increases and/or programs would require strong legislative and constituent support. The addition of new FTE has been very difficult in the past, and there are currently no indications that this will change significantly in the near future. The current number of FTE places limitations on the Division's ability to successfully implement new programs, or assume management of new sites.

Contracting with the private sector to help meet needs has been an important way of compensating for FTE limitations in the past, and this will likely continue. The use of volunteers and interns has played an increasingly important role in helping the Division meet its needs; this trend will also continue, although these programs are not miracle cures for staff deficiencies, and can not be expanded infinitely.



*Chapter VIII: Alternative Futures for Montana State Parks*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**\* FEES AND FUNDING:**

**+ Evaluate New Types of User Fees and Aggressively Search for Outside Alternative Funding Sources**

- +Maintain Current Fee and Funding Structure, with Adjustments only as these funds naturally inflate
- +Reduce Fees and/or Reliance on Outside Funding Sources

There is a need to seriously explore more secure, long-term funding sources which are less vulnerable to fluctuations in the larger political and economic environment. Foundation and support group help, new user/and or commercial use fees, and other funding options should all be explored. The tourism industry has the potential to be an important ally in developing alternative funding sources. The health of the State Park System and the Parks Program will remain subject to volatile outside forces if the current fee and funding structure remains in place into the twenty-first century.

Continuing to nurture support for the fee system is critical, as is setting the groundwork for reasonable, regular fee increases (e.g., every five years). Educating the public about the need for fees--as well as carefully explaining how they are used--is a necessary precursor to any fee increase. While the importance of fees is likely to increase, it is not a realistic or desirable goal to have the park system totally dependent on them. A reasonable expectation is that user fees will make up between 30 and 50 percent of future budgets, with a mix of other funding sources making up the remainder. Fees must remain equitable and within the range of surrounding states, with more effort made to ensure that low-income Montanans can afford to visit Montana State Parks.



## **IX LOOKING TOWARD 2020:**

### **OUTCOMES, ISSUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES FOR MONTANA STATE PARKS**

#### **Overview and Outcomes**

Identifying and prioritizing the many issues facing Montana State Parks is one of the main goals of this Plan. The issues addressed in this section were determined to be the most important ones facing the system.

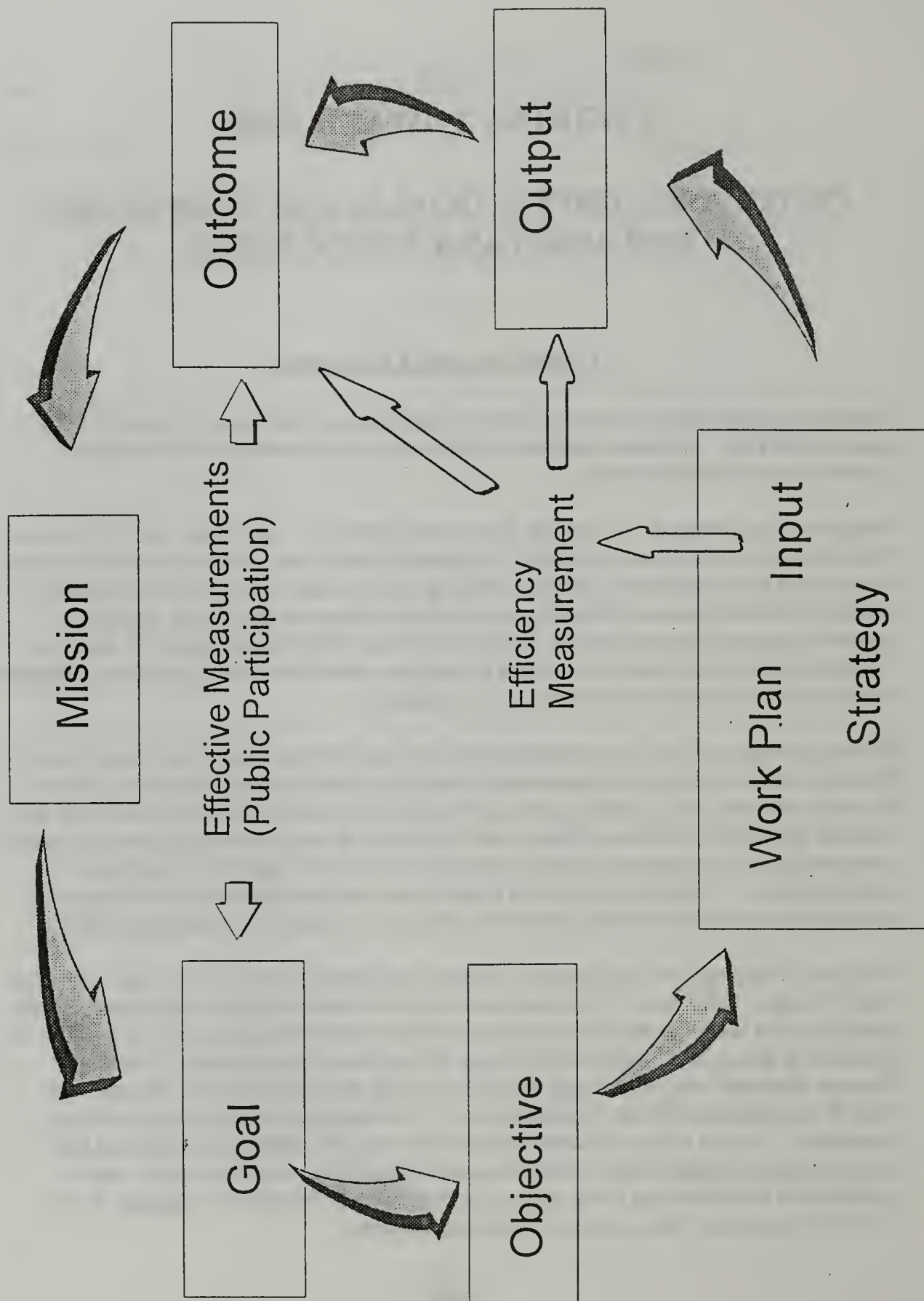
Each issue listed refers to a significant park-related problem or opportunity identified during the early stages of the planning process. Beginning in 1995, the list of issues were developed and evolved from a number of sources, including the following: public scoping workshops; written comments received during the scoping period; surveys of park users, Montana residents, and park passport holders; a focus group; and FWP staff members. Some of the issues listed below are dealt with in detail in this Plan, while others will require more intensive work and development after the document is completed.

Below each issue is a goal, which is intended to be a general statement about desired results. In some cases, a more specific, quantitative objective is listed, although this wasn't possible for every issue and goal. Finally, a series of strategies are listed under each issue; these are possible approaches or courses of action that can be used to help resolve the issue and achieve the stated goal. The strategies should be regarded as a menu of options for attacking a particular issue. In order to achieve the goals, a programmatic approach will be utilized which draws on staff from throughout the Department (see figure IX-1 and appendix D).

The goals, objectives, and strategies are ultimately designed to achieve at least one of the four major outcomes listed below. The outcomes--which are broad enough to encompass virtually everything that occurs in the Parks Program--can be defined as the final results of a project or program, as determined by the people who are the recipients or participants. The Parks Program outcomes bear strong similarity to the mission the park system was charged with when it was established by the Legislature in 1939, which suggests a measure of enduring consistency. Two of the most notable changes since the park system was established have been the increasing importance of education and interpretation, on the one hand, and the growing role of tourism and travel in the state economy, on the other (see appendix L for more information on other preliminary program outcomes).



**FIGURE IX-1**  
**OUTCOMES-BASED PLANNING PROCESS**



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

The essential question which arises from the outcomes approach is “did the project or program accomplish what was intended?” In the case of a new parks brochure, for example, the outcome is not how many were printed (an output), but whether or not they were effective in conveying the intended information to readers. In order to determine whether outcomes are being accomplished, the intent is to use carefully selected performance measures to periodically measure accomplishments over time; a selection of possible performance measures is listed under each outcome.

The performance measures are not intended to be all-inclusive, but are rather a sample of what can be measured over time to track progress. It is worth noting that the performance measures include tracking changes in both the physical world (e.g., measuring environmental improvement or degradation over time), as well as social attitudes (e.g., through surveys). In addition, measurements can be both external to FWP (e.g., park visitors) and internal (e.g., what kind of progress park staff feel is being made).

Parks Program outcomes--with generalized performance measures listed underneath--are as follows:

**1) PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF RESOURCES:** A Parks Program where natural, historical, and recreational resources are enhanced and protected in perpetuity.

- \* Changes in resource conditions over time (e.g., tracked by changes in the number of noxious weeds per acre, linear feet of eroded stream bank, number of historical building requiring repair work, etc.).
- \* Public satisfaction of visitors with quality of resources (e.g., tracked by surveys, focus groups, compliments and complaints, etc.).
- \* Monitoring progress on addressing threats to state parks (e.g., number of key inholdings secured, conservation easements, acres of land acquired, etc. ).

**2) EXCEEDING VISITOR EXPECTATIONS:** A Parks Program where visitor expectations are met or exceeded due to the quality of the natural and cultural resources, recreational opportunities, facilities, maintenance, programs, and staff.

- \* Visitor satisfaction with various aspects of Montana State Park Program.
- \* Long-range visitation trends in Montana State Parks.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**3) EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION:** A Parks program which provides outstanding education and interpretation of Montana's natural, cultural and recreational resources, and the conservation issues which face them.

- \* Visitor satisfaction with education and interpretive programs.
- \* Participation rates in educational and interpretive efforts (e.g., number of school tours at parks, etc.).
- \* Number of new education and interpretive efforts started (both internally, and through cooperative efforts with partners).

**4) TOURISM AND ECONOMIC STABILITY:** A Parks Program which contributes to Montana's tourism industry and general economic stability, in a manner which is sustainable for the system's key resources.

- \* Number of cooperative partnerships (with local communities, chambers of commerce, other recreation and resource managers, etc.), and an assessment of what they have accomplished.
- \* Research on the economic impacts of state parks and visitor spending patterns.
- \* Trends in resident/non-resident visitation.

In addition to the outcomes and performance measures listed above, the major issues addressed in this chapter--organized by category--are detailed below. In some cases, issues could logically fall into more than one category, but were listed under the one which seemed most appropriate.

**Planning and Design:**

- \* Configuration and Coverage of the State Park System
- \* Conservation of Park Resources
- \* State Park Management Plans
- \* Park Design and Development



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Policy:**

- \* Commercial Use of Park Sites
- \* Role of the Private Sector
- \* Water-based Recreation Management

**Operations, Management, and Maintenance:**

- \* Crime, Vandalism, and Enforcement
- \* Standards: Design, Operations, Maintenance, and Safety
- \* Education, Interpretation, and Special Events
- \* Volunteers and Interns

**Communication and Coordination:**

- \* Civic Organizations, Support Groups, Tourism Associations, and Other Partners
- \* Visitor Information
- \* Communication Within and Between Agencies

**Funding and Fees:**

- \* Parks Program Funding Sources
- \* Parks Program Fees

**Administrative:**

- \* Parks Program Staffing
- \* Data Collection/Monitoring Visitor Experience
- \* Programmatic Outcomes, Performance-based Budgeting, and Six-Year Plans
- \* Parks Program/FWP Decision-making Hierarchy

**Planning and Design**

**Issue: Configuration and Coverage of the State Park System**

**Goal:** *A state park system which reflects the geographic, natural, cultural, and recreational diversity of Montana, and adequately addresses the needs and desires of park users.*

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Explanation:** Many of Montana's most significant public resources are on federal land, but there are some important assets which have fallen through the cracks and may be most appropriately preserved for public use as part of the state park system, or under cooperative management which includes Parks Program participation. While potential gaps in the system are discussed in detail in chapter five, this type of analysis needs to be done periodically, with needs re-prioritized as circumstances change.

It is important that the Montana State Park system adequately represent Montana's diversity, geographic and otherwise. The northeastern quarter of the state, in particular, is not well represented. It is not necessary or even desirable that state parks be distributed throughout the state in a completely equal fashion. Nonetheless, geographic distribution and proximity to population centers should be factors used in assessing potential new acquisitions. As Montana's population becomes more urban, there is likely to be continued, growing demand for more recreational resources near urban centers.

**Objective:** None specified.

**Strategies:**

**1) List and Prioritize Sites:** A priority list of sites for possible inclusion in the system should be maintained and updated by the Helena Parks Office. A map with the locations of identified sites should be included with the listing. It would also be helpful to include key data about each site (e.g., estimated acreage in need of protection, cost, contact, etc.).

The report on potential future state parks should also discuss any parks which no longer meet the objectives of the state park system, as well as priority inholdings for purchase. Periodic assessments of other lands owned by FWP (e.g., FAS areas) should also be undertaken to determine whether they should be more appropriately managed under other designations. Logical times to do this listing and prioritization would be as part of the system plan update and six year planning process.

**2) Inter-agency Data Sharing:** The periodic inventory of Montana resources for potential inclusion in the system must necessarily be an inter-agency effort, and rely on recommendations and information collected by other agencies. The inter-agency Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI) is one vehicle which should be used to discuss state-wide natural, cultural, and recreational resource acquisition priorities.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**3) Tracking Trends/Meeting Demands:** Changing state and national trends, recreational demands, and local needs should be assessed and monitored in the 6 year plan or SCORP prior to compiling the inventory of potential state park sites. Some park-related recreation opportunities expected to be in growing demand (which would either be new or represent a shift in emphasis) include the following:

A) River Recreation: While the FAS program provides a system of appropriately spaced access points along some of Montana's most popular rivers, floaters interested in overnight camping along the river are typically looking for more secluded overnight stops. If interest in float camping continues to increase, there will be a greater need for river recreation management planning, both to manage use and provide suitable campsites. The Division should consider designating a system of "recreational waterways," for which the Smith, Blackfoot, and Clark Fork (Alberton Gorge) Rivers might provide three different kinds of models. There is considerable potential for working cooperatively with a variety of other government, non-profit, and private partners on this initiative.

B) Rails-to-Trails and Other Recreational Trails: In addition to waterways, there are rail-trail type opportunities which cut across local political boundaries, and may be more appropriately managed by the state than local governments. Many other states include rail trails and greenways as part of their state park systems. More effective coordination of rail-trail and greenway opportunities is one of the recommendations included in the draft Montana State Trails Plan.

Another important recreational trails issue involves loss of access to various types of trails. While this is occurring in different parts of the state in a variety of ways, one example is the loss of trail rights-of-ways which may occur as Plum Creek Timber Company sells excess timber land to developers. This is primarily a Trails Program issue, but here may be opportunities for the Parks Program.

C) Historic Trails/Sites: Significant historic routes such as the Bozeman Trail which are not currently being managed in a coherent fashion should be investigated to see whether they offer park potential. The Nez Perce National Historic Park and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail are examples of this type of "park" which are under federal management. These linear parks would not be managed over their entire length, but would consist of a string of key sites offering opportunities for interpretation along the route.



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

In addition to historic trails, there are other historic and cultural sites of state park quality which are not currently under public ownership. Several examples of Montana history which may not be adequately represented include Montana agriculture and natural resource industries (e.g., 19th century eastern Montana homesteading, western Montana logging, mining, etc.); railroads; and stage coach stops.

D) Primitive/Natural Resource Recreation Parks and Opportunities: The addition of one or more relatively large and undeveloped parks would significantly enhance the diversity of the system, given that the majority of Montana's State Parks are comparatively small, and can not provide recreational opportunities which require significant amounts of space.

In addition to recreational considerations, another important criterion for selecting this type of park would be how effectively the natural environments encompassed within the site are preserved in some other land management system (e.g., federal, The Nature Conservancy, etc.). In cooperation with groups such as The Nature Conservancy, some states have designated "natural or research areas" which are protected due to the importance of their natural resources, with recreational use being a secondary consideration. Because of their relative lack of development, these types of parks typically have low operations and maintenance costs, and would not likely place a significant burden on the rest of the system.

In addition to the above, there are opportunities in some of the larger state parks (e.g., Makoshika, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Sluice Boxes, etc.) for a greater array of "backcountry" recreational opportunities such as longer trail systems and designated backpacking campsites. As use grows at Sluice Boxes, for example, there may be a need for a more clearly defined system of trails and campsites in order to more effectively manage use and reduce resource impacts.

Finally, it is worth noting that there are important examples of Montana natural resources which do not require large amounts of acreage to preserve. Examples include Kootenai Falls near Libby, and a potential site interpreting the repeated draining and filling of Glacial Lake Missoula, which had a profound impact on the geology and geography in western Montana.

F) Eastern Montana Parks: As discussed in more detail in the earlier chapter titled "The Current Park System," there are a disproportionate number of parks located in the western half of Montana. In fact, the entire northeastern part of

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

the state encompassed by Region 6 has no state parks. Combined with the fact that there is much less federal land in eastern Montana than in the western part of the state, there are fewer recreational opportunities available for Montanans and visitors. Additionally, Travel Montana (the tourism promotion entity in the Department of Commerce) has refocused its tourism marketing efforts to place greater attention on the eastern part of the state, in order to help diminish crowding in western Montana and to enhance economic activity in the east. One or more additional state parks in eastern Montana would mesh well with the efforts of Travel Montana to attract more visitors to this part of the state.

In addition to the general types of opportunities discussed above, there almost certainly will be unanticipated opportunities to preserve significant natural, cultural, or recreational resources during the time frame of this plan. Securing these opportunities will require a flexible and opportunistic attitude on the part of the Parks Program staff. Movement into these areas would also require political and public support, and variable degrees of new staffing and funding.

The addition of one or more of the types of sites discussed above would not preclude adding more traditional types of recreation areas which currently make up the bulk of the state park system (e.g., water-based recreation site on a lake or reservoir), assuming there were sufficient demand and support (e.g., Flathead Lake).

It is worth noting that several of the ideas listed above are similar to initiatives described in a recent report by the Montana Parks Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving Montana's park and recreation opportunities. Specifically, the report recommended that--in cooperation with other groups and organizations--Montana State Parks become more involved in managing historical trails, work toward establishing a greater park presence in eastern Montana, and establish a river recreation program oriented around the routes used by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Penfold 1997).

### **Issue: Conservation of Park Resources**

**Goal:** *Ensure that park use, management, and development are consistent with what the resources can support, and that important resources are protected; parks must be managed in a sustainable manner. In addition, the Division must work cooperatively with other public and private land owners to limit impacts from surrounding activities on park resources.*

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Explanation:** Visitors to Montana State Parks place great importance on protecting park resources. According to the 1996 State Park User survey, 87% of the resident visitors and 88% of the non-resident visitors surveyed considered park resource protection to be a high or very high priority for state park staff (Nickerson 1996).

Every park is different, both in terms of the resources it protects and the needs of the people who visit it. The Division must work to ensure that the planning and development processes used are sufficiently sophisticated so that these differences are recognized and reflected in how each park is managed.

**Objective:** None specified.

**Strategies:**

1) **Identification of Resources:** Sensitive resources in every state park will be identified and mapped; in many cases, there is not a good understanding of where these are located. Gaps in existing resource inventories need to be identified and--in cooperation with the Montana Natural Heritage Program-- a process developed for compiling the missing information (a list of species of special concern located in or near Montana State Parks is included in appendix K). Riparian areas, in particular, require special attention because they are often the focal point of visitors. These areas tend to be biologically significant, and can be quickly damaged by vehicular traffic and other activity.

2) **Identification of Threats to Parks:** Significant threats to the natural, cultural, and recreational resources in Montana's State Parks have been listed in chapter five of this plan. Specific steps which should be taken in the on-going identification and update process include the following:

A) GIS Inventory: Identified threats will be regularly incorporated into the parks geographic information system (GIS) data base as a separate layer of information.

B) Regional Priorities: As part of each six-year plan--as well as each System Plan update--every region shall review, update, and prioritize the list of threats (if any exist) facing each park.

Park-specific management and master site planning processes are also appropriate vehicles for dealing with these issues; site protection issues should



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

be addressed in every management plan. In parks where no plans have been completed, managers will, at a minimum, prepare an interim analysis of how any major proposed project fits in with the larger, long-term vision for the park.

C) Review of State-wide Priorities: Helena and regional parks staff will periodically discuss and prioritize state-wide threats facing state parks. If the state's interest is threatened, this should be brought to the attention of the Montana State Legislature.

**3) Inholdings and Buffer Zones:** The purchase of inholdings and critical adjoining lands is the highest land acquisition priority for the Division. Results from the scoping meetings indicates there is support for acquiring park inholdings, and ensuring that important buffer areas surrounding parks are protected from development or degradation. Another benefit of securing inholdings and buffer zones around parks is reducing the chance for conflicts (e.g., noise, trespassing, fire smoke, etc.) with surrounding private land owners. In addition to fee purchases of land, conservation, scenic, and recreational easements are tools which can help protect buffer areas around parks, and provide additional recreational opportunities.

### **Issue: State Park Management Plans**

**Goal:** *Complete a management plan for every park in the system. Completed management plans will typically be followed by more detailed site development plans, as appropriate.*

**Explanation:** Management plans for Montana's State Parks have been completed in a haphazard fashion, and many parks have never had management plans completed. One of the primary functions of a park management plan is to ensure that development and management decisions are a result of and consistent with overall goals for the park and the larger state-wide system (e.g., the goals in this document).

A comprehensive listing of park plan status--as well as a definition of various types of park plans--is included in chapter five.

**Objective:** A minimum of two management plans should be updated or started every year. Parks with existing management plans should be updated at intervals which are no longer than ten years. Time to complete new management plans or update existing ones will vary, depending on the number and complexity of issues, amount of public interest, and available staff time, but it is advisable to finish them in less than three years.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Strategies:**

**1) Prioritizing Plans:** On an annual basis, regional staff will make recommendations on which parks should have priority for new plans or updates. The periodic managers' meetings would likely be the best forum for discussing various regional priorities. From the perspective of state-wide needs, the Helena office will determine which plans have the highest priorities. Completed plans will be presented to the FWP Commission, per their request and as appropriate.

As of February, 1998, parks with high priority management planning needs include the following: Giant Springs; Tongue River Reservoir; Spring Meadow Lake; Bannack; Frenchtown Pond; Rosebud Battlefield; Ulm Pishkun; and Makoshika (existing plan is being updated).

**2) Assistance with Plans:** The Outdoor Recreation Planner in the Helena Parks Division Office--as well as other Helena staff--will be available to assist regional staff with management plans. Plans must be done programmatically, with the involvement of all areas of the Department, as well as appropriate outside interests. A team approach is generally preferable.

**3) Annual Update:** The Helena Office will produce an annual update on the status of management planning efforts, for distribution to regional parks staff and regional supervisors.

**4) Incentives for Completing Plans:** Specific incentives for completing priority management plans will be included in the Six Year Plan. In particular, major capital and maintenance expenditures will be linked to completion of management plans.

**Issue: Park Design and Development**

**Goal:** *Ensure that park design and development are appropriate for the site environment, and are shaped by solid information on both recreational demands and site characteristics. From a collective system-wide perspective, state park design and development need to meet a wide diversity of interests and needs, even though there will be great differences from park to park.*

**Explanation:** The Parks Division seeks to provide an appropriate amount and type of park facilities, taking a balanced approach to protect resources and meet the wide diversity of needs and interests of visitors. The Montana State Park system is unlikely to ever be developed as

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

intensively as systems found in other, more urbanized states due to visitor preferences, the nature of the system, and budgetary constraints. The intensity of development needs to be examined on a case-by-case basis, depending on site resources, visitation, local interests, and available budget. While most sites require on-going maintenance and selected incremental improvements, there are a few parks which could potentially benefit from more intensive developments such as visitor centers (listed in "Park Resource Inventory" section). Additionally, if the demand for improving park self-sufficiency increases, this may lead to greater interest in types of development with the potential to generate revenue, while still maintaining key resources.

**Objective:** None specified.

**Strategies:**

- 1) **Consistency with Plans:** Projects should be consistent with the direction identified in the management plan (when completed) and the site development plan. In cases where a management plan is not complete, the environmental document for the project should discuss how the proposal fits into current long-term thinking about the future of the park.
- 2) **Input on Projects:** Major projects should be routinely scoped by a "design team" which includes, at a minimum, staff from the region and/or park, Design and Construction personnel, at least one representative from the Helena Parks Office, and other personnel (e.g., other FWP Divisions, cooperating agencies, etc.) as needed. Appointing a citizen's advisory committee or utilizing the FWP Commission could also be worth considering on certain large, complicated projects.
- 3) **Public Participation:** Ensure that the public and other interested parties have the opportunity to participate in major park decisions through the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process and other appropriate means. Park managers are encouraged to make periodic use of visitor surveys to help them gauge what types of new facilities might be desired. In addition to park users, it is important that non-users are occasionally surveyed to determine why they aren't visiting state parks, and what it would take to get them to do so. Following the 1997 Legislative session, public input is required on each potential capital development project prior to requesting funds.
- 4) **Computer Imaging Technology:** Working with the FWP Design and Construction unit, the Parks Division should experiment with computer imaging technology to assist in the development of site design alternatives for major projects. Using a photograph



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

of the site as a base, various design alternatives can be digitally rendered in a realistic fashion. These comparative images can be valuable tools for helping both the public and park staff understand and evaluate the alternatives before construction begins.

**5) Managing New Recreational Technology, Opportunities, and Demands:** The Division needs to work more actively with regional managers on tracking and assessing new recreational technology affecting the Parks Division, in order to develop coherent policy and management strategies. Montana State Parks do not need to meet every new recreational demand; some needs will necessarily be more appropriately met by the private sector or other providers.

Changes in recreation technology will continue to present challenges for park managers. Camping is a good example: Thirty years ago people were more likely to use tents, rather than the large and increasingly sophisticated recreational vehicles (RVs) available today. The most frequently mentioned issue at the Plan scoping workshops was the need for more dump stations, and this is a demand the Parks Program needs to continue working on. Yet tenters remain an important constituency, and their needs--which are different from those of RV owners-- must be met.

In order to better accommodate tent campers, there are opportunities for offering walk-in campsites at some state park campgrounds. These sites, which would be located a short distance from campground access roads, would provide greater quiet and privacy for campers willing to carry their gear a short distance. At some parks in other states which offer this experience, wheeled carts are provided to help campers move gear from their vehicle to the site. These types of sites would likely have great appeal to bicycle campers as well.

Another variation on this theme are walk-in sites for water-based travelers; a system of these sites are being planned at Flathead Lake sites to provide camping for non-motorized water travelers. One of the problems for non-motorized over-night canoeists and kayakers on heavily-used water bodies such as Flathead Lake (with mostly private shoreline) is finding a place to spend the night.

Two areas worth examining on a site-by-site basis is the potential for providing teepees and/or camping cabins to offer visitors an alternative to camping. The three existing cabins at Lewis and Clark Caverns have provided a useful model for possible use at other sites. Additionally, managers at a few sites are planning on adding teepees during the next year; the success of these will be monitored.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Finally, it is essential the Parks Program continues to move toward a more user-friendly system for children, the elderly, and the disabled. The routine installation of fold-down changing tables in both mens' and womens' restrooms is just one example of how the needs of young children--as well as both their parents--can be more effectively met.

## **Policy**

(Note: A comprehensive list of policy statements is included in chapter 10.)

### **Issue: Commercial Use of Park Sites**

**Goal:** *Obtain better information on the types and extent of commercial use occurring at state parks and fishing access sites. Based on an analysis of this information and the results of current internal discussions on this issue, the Division should begin implementing fair and consistent state-wide policies toward commercial use, while still allowing for regional flexibility.*

**Explanation:** A substantial amount of commercial use is occurring at state parks and fishing access sites, yet very little is known about what types of uses are occurring, where the use is occurring, or what impacts it may be having on both other users and resources. In order to be a responsible land manager, FWP needs to ensure that resources are protected, recreational conflicts minimized, and that there is reasonable reimbursement to the state for private money made using the public's resources.

**Objective:** Develop a comprehensive set of commercial use policies for Divisional and/or Department lands by the end of 1998, or as part of the first Six-Year Plan. These policies should be reviewed and revised as part of each subsequent Six-Year Plan.

### **Strategies:**

**1) Collect Information on Commercial Use:** Helena and regional staff should work with the rest of the agency to design procedures to collect information on the type and extent of commercial use on FWP sites. All commercial users are required (through ARM Rule 12.8.211) to secure permission from the FWP Director for long-term use of Department owned or managed land. Two separate but related initiatives for beginning to implement this rule were recently approved by the FWP Commission, with implementation beginning in 1998.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

A) State-wide Commercial Use Registration: This was proposed to the FWP Commission early in 1998, with the long-term goal of registering and monitoring all types of commercial use at the various types of sites managed by FWP, with an initial focus on FAS sites. The intent is to assemble baseline information on commercial use which can be monitored over time to track trends. A registration fee (\$10) will be required to help cover the costs of administering the program (waived for parties registered through the State Board of Outfitters). This initiative is limited to information-gathering, and does not include any provision for managing commercial use, although management actions might eventually result depending on what kinds of trends are emerging.

B) Alberton Gorge Commercial Use Registration/Management: Another recently approved initiative involves tracking and managing commercial floating through the Alberton Gorge stretch of the Clark Fork River, from St. Johns FAS to Tarkio FAS. Use of the gorge by commercial users has increased dramatically during the last ten years, with many parties coming from out-of-state. While Montana fishing outfitters must be licensed through the State Board of Outfitters, commercial guides taking people on non-angling float trips have no specific safety or registration requirements in the state.

This proposal provides a specified period of time for commercial users to register with FWP, limits future commercial users to those who have demonstrated historical use through the registration process, and affixes a fee (three percent of gross revenues) on commercial users to help compensate for impacts on facilities and resources. Although this initiative does not directly affect any state parks, it involves management actions which conceivably could be adapted for state parks at some point in the future, although there are no plans to do so at this point.

**2) Commercial Use Policy Recommendations:** Once satisfactory background information has been compiled, a committee should be established to periodically review and revise policies for commercial use of Parks Division sites, to ensure resources are being protected and the public is being adequately compensated for impacts.



### **Issue: Role of Private Sector**

**Goal:** *Develop a clearer, more efficient Parks Program policy and process for delineating the respective roles of the public and private sectors in providing for parks and recreation needs. Irrespective of whether particular types of work are performed by the public or private sector, the ultimate goal is to provide the best service for the public in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.*

**Explanation:** State government spends a considerable amount of money on various types of consultants and contractors. Often, it is not possible to get qualified FTE to do important work, so a consultant or contractor must be hired if the work is to be completed. It would be useful to more closely examine the pros and cons of this approach in the Parks Division, and--depending on the results--systematically identify areas where additional FTE could increase long-term efficiency and effectiveness.

Another issue is the privatization of services currently provided by FWP staff, and the need to ensure that the advantages and disadvantages of the various options are accurately and fairly assessed. There may be instances where tasks currently completed under contract by the private sector might be done better and more efficiently by agency staff. Staff should also recognize that political interest in looking at private sector solutions is not likely to disappear. An occasional test case to compare delivery of services and costs may be useful in answering internal and external questions and perceptions.

A related issue is competition with the private sector, which is discussed in more detail in the policy statement portion of this document. It is worth noting here, however, that the state park system has an obligation to provide the basic services visitors desire and expect. For example, even though private camping may be available in an area, visitors expect that they should be able to camp at many state parks. In most instances, the type of camping experience offered at Montana State Parks is different enough from what people can get at private facilities to preclude direct competition.

**Objective:** None specified.

#### **Strategies:**

**1) Evaluate Role of Consultants:** Develop processes to more effectively evaluate both in-house and consultant options. Conduct research on what other states and agencies have found when looking at this issue. In general, use of the private sector is most likely to be successful when there are specialized and focused work items which need to be accomplished, without the competing demands (e.g., equity vs. efficiency) the public sector must routinely address.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**2) Develop Standards and Maintain Accurate Accounting Records:** Developing and monitoring standards for work performed is necessary so that the same level and quality of work is being compared during an evaluation. In order to be in a position to make a fair and accurate evaluation of the relative efficiencies of providing a service internally versus contracting with the private sector, it is necessary to keep accurate and standardized accounting records that are easy to access.

**3) Examine Feasibility of Additional FTE:** If results of above process indicate efficiencies are greater by doing certain types of work internally, work toward securing necessary FTE in specified areas. Conversely, more reliance on the private sector may be appropriate in some areas.

**4) Competition with Private Sector Providers:** Periodically update and refine the policy statement on this issue included in the last chapter of the Plan.

### **Issue: Water-based Recreation and Management**

**Goal:** *The roles and responsibilities of the Parks Division (and FWP as a whole) need to be further defined in respect to management of water-based recreation, both inside and outside the boundaries of state parks.*

**Explanation:** Management of water-based recreation is an issue which affects a number of state parks, but it is also a much broader state-wide recreation management issue involving both rivers and lakes. Over the past two decades the public's use of Montana's water-based recreational opportunities has grown rapidly. A significant amount of this recreational use now occurs on rivers. Rivers that once only saw the occasional floating angler now receive a steady amount of both angling and other recreational floating use. With this increased pressure has come opportunities for conflict between competing types of users.

The roles and responsibilities of FWP in general and the Parks Division in particular as they relate to competing types of user groups has only been defined in a few cases. One of the earliest attempts to manage river recreation was the establishment of the Big Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor, which was a cooperative effort between managing agencies and local landowners forged to reduce conflicts between recreationists and private property holders. The initial agreement was signed in the mid-1970s, and was renewed for another 10 years in 1994. While the agreement specified where recreationists could go on the private land in the corridor, it didn't include any mechanism to manage the number of floaters.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Another example of the Department's management of recreational floating is the section of the Smith River between Camp Baker and Eden Bridge. Before the permit system was implemented, recreational use of the river was leading to crowding problems, damage to campsites and other resources, and contributing to trespass and related conflicts with private landowners. Implementation of regulatory controls on the Smith River's recreational floating has significantly reduced the problems that existed before the Department was granted this management authority by the Legislature.

Evidence suggests that demands for the kind of primitive river floating experience the Smith River offers are increasing. With a successful model in place, there is likely to be interest in looking at other types of recreational management for more Montana rivers, although solutions are likely to be different than those on the Smith because of the limited access on that river. Currently, there are efforts underway initiate management of commercial floating in the heavily-used Alberton Gorge stretch of the Clark Fork River (see commercial use recommendations).

While recreation management on rivers and lakes is an issue that transcends state parks, per se, it is an issue which could influence and shape the future configuration of the park system, particularly if there is a movement toward managing more rivers as recreation corridors with designated campsites, limitations on use, or other types of management. A key factor which will shape FWP involvement in this area is the Legislature; the agency does not currently have the state-wide authority to manage river-based social issues, aside from its authority on the Smith. Legislation to grant FWP and its Commission broader authority was introduced during recent sessions by interested parties, but failed to pass. It is likely that similar legislation will be introduced by interested groups during future sessions.

One of the major sub-components of this issue is conflict between motorized and non-motorized recreational use of water. In particular, the management of personal water craft has--as elsewhere in the country--emerged as a contentious issue.

**Objective:** Begin a comprehensive state-wide water recreation management plan in 1999, to be completed by the year 2001. Rivers and lakes should be addressed separately in the plan.

**Strategies:**

**1) Clarify Water Recreation Management Role:** Work with other FWP divisions and interested organizations to further clarify (through the Legislature and FWP Commission) the role Parks should be playing in water-based recreation management. Some of the specific areas which need to be more clearly defined include the following:



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

- \* Social conflicts (e.g., motorized vs. non-motorized use, commercial vs. non-commercial, recreationists vs. private landowners, etc.)
- \* Commercial use
- \* Diversity of opportunity
- \* Payment methods by non-anglers (who don't support sites through license fees)
- \* Water safety
- \* Navigation
- \* Access
- \* Impacts on private landowners
- \* Crowding
- \* Enforcement
- \* Site development
- \* Acquisition
- \* Overall philosophy and approach; draft legislation or Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) should be prepared where appropriate.

Significant new responsibilities in these areas will likely require additional FTE and funding support.

**2) Establish Advisory Committees:** In preparation for undertaking a water recreation management plan, technical and user group advisory committees should be established. In addition to functioning as sounding boards for the plan, these committees would have the potential for providing an on-going forum for addressing water recreation issues from around the state.

**3) Centralized River Recreation Information:** Currently, there is no centralized or coherent source of information on river recreation. If FWP is given direction to become more active in this area, the Parks Division--in concert with other FWP programs and agencies--should work toward becoming a centralized repository for river recreation information.

## **Operations, Management, and Maintenance**

### **Issue: Crime, Vandalism, and Enforcement**

**Goal:** *Work internally and cooperatively with the Enforcement Division and law enforcement agencies to reduce crime, vandalism, and non-compliance, and improve visitors' perception that Montana State Parks are safe, non-threatening places to visit.*

**Explanation:** Enforcement was one of the most significant issues to emerge from the Parks Division meeting workshop in 1995, and was also mentioned at the public scoping workshops. The 1996 mail-out State Park survey found that a majority of park users (81 %) believed that enforcement of park rules and regulations was either important or very important. The same survey indicated that 61 % of the users were either satisfied or very satisfied with current enforcement; another 12 % were either dissatisfied or dissatisfied, with 27 % indicating no opinion. According to the on-site survey results, 64 % of the resident visitors and 84 % of the non-resident visitors surveyed felt park rangers should be the primary law enforcement agents in Montana State Parks (Nickerson 1996).

Closely linked to enforcement are issues pertaining to visitor and employee safety. According to the 1996 on-site survey, 75 % of both resident and non-resident visitors rated visitor safety as a high or very high priority. The on-site survey indicated that 43 % of the resident visitors and 37 % of the non-residents had a high or very high level of concern for their personal safety in Montana State Parks (Nickerson 1996).

Another related issue is vandalism, which has become a serious Parks Division concern, demanding more staff time and financial resources. According to park users in the mail-out portion of the 1996 survey, 90 % felt control of vandalism was either an important or very important priority. Those same users were relatively satisfied with current control of vandalism: 61 % were either satisfied or very satisfied, while 19 % were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (Nickerson 1996). It is likely that vandalism is an issue that park staff are much more aware of than the typical visitor, who may not notice the damage, or that the damage has been repaired.

Lack of fee compliance is a serious enforcement issue at some parks, and many fishing access sites. In addition to the problem of a high percentage of people not paying at some un-staffed sites, a related issue is theft of fee receipts from "iron ranger" collection boxes.

Descriptive information about Montana State Park enforcement mechanisms is included in the section of this plan titled "Parks Division Programs and Activities."

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Objective:** Set up a comprehensive tracking system in the Helena Office by the end of 1998 for crime, vandalism, and safety incidents; these should be compiled in an annual report, or included as part of the annual visitation report. Each Six Year Plan should assess recent trends and make recommendations on how to reduce occurrences. Surveys should be used to monitor changes in how safe visitors feel in state parks, as well as other areas which pertain to this issue.

**Strategies:**

**1) Address Priority Enforcement Issues:** Some of the most significant enforcement issues identified during the planning process include the following: uncontrolled dogs; vandalism; firearms; people taking too much time loading and unloading watercraft at boat ramps; alcohol consumption; loud music; non-compliance with fees; campers holding unoccupied sites with trailers or other equipment; driving off-road; and camping in undesignated areas.

Another issue involves water skiers and jet skis going too close to shore and other recreational users, being used at night, and/or being operated by people who are too young. In respect to water conflicts, some people at the scoping meetings expressed interest in establishing more no-wake areas, or regulating recreational use by establishing time or area zoning.

An important issue which transcends state parks and the Parks Division is the enforcement of trail regulations. Enforcement problems related to trails include motorized encroachment into wilderness areas and other off-limit areas, impacts to wildlife and other natural resources, conflicts between trail users, failure to license or register vehicles, and seasonal misuse of vehicles during hunting season.

During the management planning process, if not before, park managers should review policies regarding pets, especially dogs. Uncontrolled dogs can be a serious nuisance and safety hazard. Pet owners need to know the rules; pet rules need to be enforced.

**2) Clarify Law Enforcement Roles:** Continue to work on defining the respective roles and responsibilities of park rangers, wardens, ex-officio staff, volunteer ranger reserves, local and state law enforcement officers, etc. Within FWP, Parks and FAS enforcement needs should be a higher priority than they have been in the past; changes in hiring policies, recruitment, and training would help achieve this goal. Another way to help start accomplishing this would be temporary assignments of law enforcement



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

personnel to the Parks Division, in order to help them get better acquainted with the issues.

**3) Crime Reporting (e.g., VIP-MONT implementation):** Reporting procedures in parks were examined in early 1998 to see how they could be improved. A decision was made to specifically identify a number to report (non-fish and game related) violations in parks (1-800-VIP-MONT). The number is the same as the existing TIP-MONT number, but the new identity may encourage more people to report other types of crimes in parks such as vandalism.

In order to be successful, more promotion of this mechanism for parks and FAS sites is needed to provide the same notoriety afforded poaching. To help with this, staff are in the process of establishing a citizens' reward program for reporting vandalism and park crimes through VIP-MONT. Staff need to ensure that the VIP-MONT number--in addition to warden and sheriff phone numbers--are posted at appropriate site locations.

**4) On-site Presence:** Look at increasing on-site presence (trained volunteers, more FTE, etc.) where there are persistent crime or vandalism problems. Maintaining an on-site presence not only helps to reduce the likelihood of crime, but helps ensure a quick response if a problem arises. The Parks Program should continue to work toward implementing a volunteer ranger reserve program, patterned after the County Sheriffs Reserve Program.

**5) Information on Crimes:** Where certain types of crimes are persistent (e.g., car break-ins, etc.), ensure that visitors are informed about actions they can take to minimize victimization through signs, brochures, or other means. More generally, Montana State Parks need to continue working on effective public relations efforts to inform the public about state-wide crime and enforcement issues affecting Montana State Parks.

**6) Vandal-resistant Facilities:** Ensure that vandal-resistant design considerations are routinely incorporated into new facilities, where appropriate.

**7) Increase Penalties:** Examine the feasibility of increasing fines and penalties for damaging park property, as well as for various types of outdoor recreation crimes.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Issue: Standards: Design, Operations, Maintenance, and Safety**

**Goal:** *Utilize design, facility, construction, operation, and maintenance standards to improve resource protection, serve public needs, and promote greater efficiency.*

**Explanation:** In general, the Montana State Park system and FWP as a whole are managed in a decentralized manner, sometimes resulting in substantial differences from site to site, and region to region. While the decentralized emphasis is not likely to change, there may be areas where more state-wide consistency could improve efficiency and result in a better experience for visitors. Coverage of standards could be at three different levels: park-specific; regional; and state-wide. One of the principal recommendations in the draft 1989 System Plan was the development of standards for park design, acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance (RMO 1989). Safety is another operational area which can be enhanced by establishing standards (a safety policy for the Parks Program is in place).

The 1996 State Park survey indicated that good park maintenance is important to visitors. Results from the mail-out version of the survey indicated that 90% of the park users surveyed said that reducing maintenance should not be an option for cutting park budgets. The mail-out survey also indicated that 91% of park users regarded protecting park facilities and resources as an important or very important priority (Nickerson 1996).

**Objective:** By the year 2000, a programmatic and inter-regional committee shall complete a state-wide review of applicable facility, design, construction, operations, and maintenance procedures, and make recommendations on where standards should be applied, and what they should be. The preliminary work begun on FAS maintenance standards--as well as the current design standards used by the Design and Construction Bureau--will be the basis for starting this effort; these existing standards will be fully implemented in the regions.

**Strategies:**

1) **State-wide and Regional Standards:** Develop more specific state-wide design, facility, construction, operations, and maintenance standards, particularly for historic and cultural sites (a draft of this has already been started). Where appropriate, certain types of regional standards might also be developed. The Division should work with the Design and Construction Bureau to investigate whether existing design and construction standards are adequate to meet current needs. Procedures developed by other state and federal agencies may provide useful models.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Adopting a state-wide classification of parks would assist in the standard setting-process (e.g., parks with similar classifications could adopt or modify similar standards without having to develop new ones). Once a classification system is established, facility standards for each category should be developed as a first step. These standards would recommend the number and types of facilities typically found at each category of park. Design specifications on each type of facility would also be developed and applied on a statewide basis. Having standardized facility and design standards in place would make the development of operations and maintenance standards an easier task.

**2) Park-specific Standards:** Using available state and regional standards, managers will use the state park management planning process to help develop park-specific design, operations, and management standards. Maintenance should be divided into four components for developing standards--buildings, grounds, infrastructure, and equipment. As part of the standard development process, a schedule and list of specific duties should be developed for each item covered. There are various computer programs available which might prove useful in this effort.

**3) Monitoring Standards:** The setting for any of the standards discussed above must include a process for periodically monitoring compliance. The six-year plan could be an appropriate vehicle for reviewing and updating the standards. Adoption and compliance with standards should be linked with availability of new capital construction dollars.

**4) Historical Materials Management:** Investigate establishing a policy and standards for managing historic artifacts, photographs, and archival materials (e.g., journals, oral histories, etc.). Additional training opportunities may be necessary to facilitate this. Assistance from the private sector and the Montana Historical Society could help with this effort; a formal training agreement might be appropriate.

**5) Safety Inventory, Standards, and Education:** An inventory should be compiled of existing and potential safety hazards (both physical and social) at every state park. Each state park management plan, management plan update, and system-wide Six Year Plan should address safety issues and, where appropriate, set specific standards. The Division should continue to improve existing safety education programs for both employees and visitors.



## **Issue: Education, Interpretation, and Special Events**

**Goal:** *Work with the FWP Conservation Education Division and other partners to develop a more consistent and comprehensive approach toward education, interpretation, and special events in Montana State Parks. A consistent theme across all these efforts should be helping the public--both young and old--to better understand natural and cultural history, and the value of and need for long-term resource conservation. Interpretive and educational efforts must be diverse enough to appropriately span the range between developed and undeveloped parks.*

**Explanation:** Currently, there is a lack of consistency across the state in how education, interpretation, and special events are treated in Montana State Parks and other agency programs. While there is a need for flexibility from park to park and region to region, it would be beneficial to develop more of a state-wide focus. The number of these programs has grown dramatically during the last ten years; it is an appropriate time to develop state-wide goals, and assess how the various existing programs relate to them.

**Objective:** By the end of 1999, or as part of the first six-year plan, the Parks Division should complete a plan for education, interpretation, and special events.

### **Strategies:**

**1) Appoint Work Group:** Establish a diverse internal work group to coordinate development of the Education, Interpretive, and Special Events Plan. An advisory committee composed of external members may also be appropriate. A good example of a potential interpretation topic which cuts across divisional and agency boundaries (and could benefit from such a committee approach) is information about threatened and endangered species. The committee approach would also be useful for many park-specific interpretive plans.

**2) Recommend Improvements:** Among other things, the Plan should examine creative means to improve interpretation, education, and special events. Examples include obtaining more FTE, more flexible use of existing FTE, utilizing more friends group funding, contracted services, resolution of workers comp/insurance issues, possibility of collecting fees or donations, etc. Another possibility might be using Montana Interpretive Association dollars to help fund guests brought in to deliver special interpretive programs. The use of living history and other creative approaches should be examined.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**3) Interpretation and Learning Coordinator:** A new bureau chief position has been established to coordinate interpretation and visitor service functions, with an emphasis on cultural and historic resources. Possible duties could be as follows:

- A) Assist with and help coordinate the volunteer interpretive program.
- B) Work toward establishing more consistency in the interpretive and learning programs.
- C) Function as a training coordinator, and a catalyst to get programs started (see 4 below).
- D) Promote the image and visibility of the program.
- E) Work on the educational trunk and school curriculum programs.
- F) Improve integration of interpretation with recreation and conservation efforts.
- G) Work on state-wide special event and group use issues.
- H) Assist with improving programs and displays in state park visitor centers, regional offices, and the Helena Headquarters.
- I) Provide assistance with Watchable Wildlife Program.
- J) Secure funding for interpretive projects through the Montana State Parks and Wildlife Interpretive Association.

**4) Expanded Interpretive Tours:** The Parks Program--under the leadership of the new Visitor Services Bureau Chief in Helena--will explore the feasibility of expanding interpretive tour offerings in the state park system. One mechanism for helping accomplish this is the establishment of a fee system for tours which makes them self-supporting. The new fee rule established for the 1998-99 seasons gives the Program authority to set fees for various types of tours, as well as special events. One potential benefit of this is to give park managers a financial cushion which may help them take risks with new types of tours they might have been hesitant to initiate previously. Revenues from successfully established tour programs might also be used to help start additional tours.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**5) School Programs and Tours:** Another area which needs to be explored (either within the context of an interpretation plan or outside of it) are educational school group tours and children's programs. Possible ways to improve these programs include the following:

A) Target programs more specifically to particular grade levels, with more clearly focused curricula.

B) Parks staff need the ability to say "no" occasionally to school groups when they have reached the capacity of what they can handle. One way of managing the number of groups would be to implement a fee ( this authority was also included in the 1998-99 fee rule).

C) Address funding, FTE, and coordination problems with the Junior Ranger Program through means such as more self-guided tours and more interns.

**6) Training Opportunities:** Working with the Conservation Education Division, expand staff training opportunities for developing and administering educational and interpretive programs, as well as special events.

**7) Partnerships:** Expand cooperative interpretive/educational partnerships with the private and non-profit sectors. Work to integrate state park education and interpretive programs with similar local, state-wide, and national efforts.

**8) Using the Internet:** Use the Internet to more effectively disseminate information about Department special events, interpretation efforts, and educational programs.

### **Issue: Volunteers and Interns**

**Goal:** *Maintain, improve, and expand volunteer and intern programs, while working with the regions and other FWP Divisions to share more of the administrative duties associated with running the programs.*

**Explanation:** Volunteers and interns provide a critical supplement to the FWP workforce, as well as providing satisfying experiences for those involved. The Division's successful volunteer and intern programs have grown dramatically in recent years, and are models for the rest of the agency. In fact, the Parks Division has provided considerable assistance to other



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

FWP Divisions to help find the volunteers and interns they need. There is a need to continue looking at ways intern and volunteer functions currently carried out within the Parks Division can be more effectively shared with the other divisions through a more centralized and programmatic approach.

It is also important to continue tracking intern and volunteer utilization, to ensure that supervisory staff are not spread too thin. While interns and volunteers have had a tremendous beneficial effect on the Parks Program and FWP as a whole, they require supervision, and can not be considered a substitute for staff.

**Objective:** None specified.

**Strategies:**

- 1) Regional Coordinators:** Work with the regions to establish a designated volunteer/intern coordinator in each headquarters office.
- 2) Inter-divisional Coordination:** Look at the feasibility of establishing an intern/volunteer contact in each division. Continue to work toward securing a central FWP intern coordinator. Establish a department-wide training program to ensure that a wide range of FWP employees are equipped to effectively utilize volunteers.
- 3) Additional Funding and Support:** Work with interested foundations or other sources to create an outside source of funding to assist with the volunteer and intern programs. Some areas where additional funding and/or support could improve the programs include the following:
  - A) Improvements for Volunteers: The volunteer program could be improved by finding outside funding for workers compensation and unemployment insurance. Additionally, volunteers would be easier to place at some parks if a level camp pad could be provided, along with utility hookups. Lack of these facilities is often the most significant obstacle in recruiting qualified hosts.
  - B) Intern Assistance: The quality of experience provided interns could be enhanced by improving access to office space, computers and other office equipment, affordable housing, and transportation. Because of space limitations, interns must sometimes move from one borrowed office to another while staff are on vacation. While providing additional space could be difficult and expensive, ensuring that interns at least have access to laptop computers

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

would be a partial solution. Providing greater assistance with transportation and housing--significant obstacles for some interns--would also be helpful. Purchasing several portable trailers would provide the intern program with more flexibility, especially in cases where an intern is needed to work at sites where little or no housing is available in the area. Interns need to be an integral part of State Park programs, not an afterthought.

## **Communication and Coordination**

### **Issue: Civic Organizations, Support Groups, Tourism Associations, and Other Partners**

**Goal:** *Ensure there is continued and enhanced communication and cooperation between Montana State Parks and local communities, support groups, tourism organizations, and other organized parties with an interest in state parks.*

**Explanation:** It is essential that Parks Division staff continue to establish and maintain close relations with the wide variety of groups with an interest in state parks. An excellent state park system can not be operated in a vacuum; state parks are necessarily part of much larger social and economic systems.

**Objective:** None specified.

#### **Strategies:**

**1) "Adopt-a-Park" Concept:** Promote the "adopt-a-park" concept, where a local group assumes responsibility for certain types of park duties such as picking up litter. This concept is similar to the programs used by many state highway departments to help clean up trash along roadways. An annual clean-up day at specified sites would be another idea worth pursuing. Both of these ideas could also be used in the FAS program.

**2) Support Groups and Community Connections:** Park managers should work closely with local communities and, where appropriate, assist in forming support groups. A column in the local newspaper, periodic press releases, or occasional talks to area groups are examples of some ways of getting out information and forming relationships. Special events can also be good ways of getting local people more

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

involved with the state parks in their area. Providing residents of local communities with an annual “free day at the park” event should be considered as a way of helping generate local support.

It is critical that local park supporters feel that state parks are part of their communities. It is also essential that local support groups have a clear understanding of their role in relation to the park (e.g., advisory rather than decision-making). Managers need to ensure that local supporters understand that state parks belong to citizens from across Montana, and that non-resident visitors also have a stake in how parks are managed. In addition to locally-based groups, Park Program staff need to work at fostering cooperative relationships with state-wide park support organizations.

**3) Parks, Tourism, and Economic Development:** Park managers need to work closely with local, regional, and state tourism groups, chambers of commerce, and other organizations concerned with economic development. The extent to which the park is regarded as an integral component of the local economy will, at least in part, shape the amount of support it has from local citizens. If situations emerge in the future where certain parks are reaching a saturation point, managers should work with local, regional, and state tourism officials to utilize selective promotion as a visitor management tool.

**4) Legislative Field Days:** High profile parks should consider hosting an annual field day for area legislators (as well as other politicians) to help keep them better informed about state parks and park programs in their area. A continual communication link to area legislators is essential to the health of the program. Sending legislators “before and after” pictures of improvements, inviting them to ribbon cutting or ground breaking ceremonies, asking them to participate in special events, and sending out regular briefings are all strategies to help improve legislative communication.

**5) Tribal Contacts:** Parks Program staff should try to work closely with affected tribes on issues which affect them, particularly in respect to parks which preserve and/or interpret elements of Native American history and culture.

### **Issue: Communication/Cooperation Within and Between Agencies**

**Goal:** *Improve communication and cooperation within the State Parks Program, between the Parks Program and other FWP programs and divisions, and between the Parks Program and other agencies involved with resource management, recreation, and tourism.*



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Explanation:** The public often doesn't differentiate between one resource agency or division and another. Significant strides have been made during the past decade to meet public demands for improved coordination within and between local, state, and federal agencies, and the pressures to continue these improvements are unlikely to diminish.

**Objective:** None specified.

**Strategies:**

**1) Formats for Working with Other Agencies:** The Parks Division should continue to be an active member of the Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI), which includes the other state and federal agencies in the state involved in tourism and recreation. The importance of this organization is likely to increase, along with various ad hoc committees and partnerships formed to address specific inter-agency issues.

**2) Communication within FWP:** Improving communication and cooperation between FWP divisions and programs has been a major goal of FWP for a number of years. Managers should continue to look for ways to ensure that Parks Division activities are integrated with what is occurring elsewhere in the agency, and encourage programmatic cross-training.

Parks Division staff need to fully utilize the communications resources in the Conservation Education Division (e.g., video, press releases, FWP web site, etc.) to ensure that the public, FWP employees, and staff from other agencies have a sense of what is occurring in Montana State Parks.

One area which offers opportunities for more interaction between programs is historical and cultural resources. The Parks Program has expertise in historical and cultural resources which could be applied more effectively to other parts of the agency (e.g., historical buildings or archaeological sites in Wildlife Management Areas). The Parks Program has two staff members in Region 3, for example, who have received historical building preservation training; their skills could be applied not only to state park projects in other regions, but also across FWP program (and even interagency) boundaries

**3) Parks Division Communication:** The Division is currently using a number of effective tools to facilitate communication and foster cooperation, including the quarterly managers' meetings, televised "met-net" meetings, conference calls, the

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

biennial Division meeting, office staff meetings, and other vehicles. Particularly because of the far-flung nature of the park system, maintaining existing communication channels and experimenting with new ones are essential component building blocks to maintaining an excellent park system and a healthy Division. A periodic State Parks newsletter and more effective use of electronic communications may be two areas to look at to help improve communication.

**4) School Trust Lands:** Some important components of the park system include leased School Trust lands. Because the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) believes the constitutional mission of these properties requires that they be committed only to uses that bring the highest immediate return for the school system (measured in dollars), all other values become secondary.

In the past, key parks have been lost when a lease expired and another bid came in higher (e.g., Elmo on Flathead Lake). Over the long-term, the Division should work with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Legislature, the Governor's Office and other interested parties to explore ways a wider range of values can be incorporated into the mission of these lands. One approach would be to establish an inter-agency work committee to draft recommended legislation that all affected parties concur on.

In addition to working on long-term policy and management changes, there are some sites where FWP should work to secure fee title to School Trust lands.

### **Issue: Visitor Information**

**Goal:** *Provide park visitors with the information they need for an informative and enjoyable visit, while ensuring that the information provided adequately protects resources.*

**Explanation:** Because of the highly decentralized nature of the park system, insufficient attention has been paid to identifying state-wide information needs, and setting minimal standards for the types of information which should be made available to visitors. This issue is closely connected to the need to develop a more centralized and comprehensive approach to park program education and interpretation.

**Objective:** None specified.

## **Strategies:**

- 1) Identify Information Gaps:** As part of a comprehensive divisional interpretation and education planning effort--and as part of each management plan--visitor information gaps in each park should be identified and prioritized. An important theme of this effort must be to ensure that park information leads to reasonable expectations about what visitors can expect at the site.
- 2) Visitor Maps:** Park maps need to more widely integrated into brochures and other public information. The Division has just completed a parks base map project which will make it easier to incorporate site maps into public information. It is worth noting that some types of sensitive areas (e.g., archaeological sites, etc.) should not be mapped or specifically identified.
- 3) Watchable Wildlife:** Staff need to be ensure that relevant Watchable Wildlife Program material is routinely incorporated into brochures and other public information sources.
- 4) State-wide Guidelines:** The Division should consider establishing more detailed and comprehensive guidelines for brochures and other information materials. Brochure guidelines have been established, but a revision of this material would be appropriate. In order to maintain state-wide consistency, it is important that brochures and other information materials be reviewed by Helena staff prior to publication.
- 5) Montana State Parks and Wildlife Interpretive Association:** The Interpretive Association has provided significant benefits to both the cooperating partners and the public. For the Parks Program, in particular, proceeds from Association sales have been used to fund many interpretive projects. The Parks Division should continue to support the Association through the provision of floor space for materials and administrative support, working to improve this productive relationship.
- 6) Utilize Information/Marketing as Visitor Management Tools:** Marketing can be used as a tool to help manage use at heavily visited sites. Applications for Smith River float permits, for example, were nearly doubling on an annual basis the first several years after the permit system was established. Because of this increasing interest, it makes sense not to promote this opportunity. Bannack Days may be another example: Visitation between 1996 and 1997 jumped by 26 percent (compared to a historical annual increase of approximately 3-4 percent), and there is growing concern that the size of this event can not continue to increase without jeopardizing the resources which make it possible. On a state-wide scale, Travel Montana is devoting more resources to



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

promoting eastern Montana, where tourism has not been developed to the extent it has in western Montana. Effective marketing can be used to not only redistribute use geographically, but also encourage visitors to take advantage of shoulder and off-season periods.

As visitation continues to grow, Parks Program staff need to periodically revisit the relationship between state parks, tourism, and resource sustainability, on the one hand, and the role of private versus public sector marketing of public facilities, on the other. The Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI) provides an excellent forum for this type of ongoing assessment.

## **Funding and Fees**

### **Issue: Parks Program Funding Sources**

**Goal:** *Establish adequate and stable long-term funding sources for Montana State Parks.*

**Explanation:** In order to be in a position to ride out tough political and economic times, it is important that the Parks Program and its supporters work on improving the mix of funding sources available. It is critical that the package of funding sources be developed in a way so that increases in one mechanism don't lead to reductions in others. In particular, Montana State Parks lack adequate funding for historic and cultural preservation, and have no long-term source for acquisition needs. Many existing funding sources are earmarked by federal and state law for certain purposes, and may not be used in ways other than those specified (e.g., Wallop-Breaux, Montana Accommodations Tax).

**Objective:** None specified.

### **Strategies:**

**1) Expand Gift Item Program:** A number of state parks systems have developed comprehensive gift catalogs which include educational materials, T-shirts, coffee mugs, books, maps, and other items. In some state parks outside of Montana, entire buildings or significant portions of visitor centers are devoted to the sale of products at least somewhat related to the natural and cultural resources in and around the park. The selection of sale items is important, both from the perspective of what will sell and--at least as important--what will help people better recognize, understand, appreciate and remember the resources in and around the park.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Some of these material are already offered for sale in regional headquarters and visitor centers through the auspices of the Montana State Parks and Wildlife Interpretive Association. The range of materials for sale, however, could be expanded, along with marketing mechanisms; a selection of State Parks items for sale, for example, was recently listed on the FWP Internet homepage. Another option would be to send passport holders a catalog or list of available items when they receive their "Early Bird" Passport reminder, prior to the holidays.

**2) Improve Opportunities for Charitable/Foundation Support:** In the early 1990s, Lutheran Services compiled catalogs for state park systems around the country in order to enlist support for charitable contributions. In Montana, the effort was not successful, in part because the catalog did not specify what people were "giving" the park system (e.g., a bench or picnic shelter with their name on it, etc.). There are many people who might be interested in making charitable donations to Montana State Parks if they were provided with a list of needs, a convenient way of donating, and a clear sense that they had made a concrete contribution (rather than a vague sense that their money had disappeared in the bureaucracy).

In addition to improving opportunities for individuals to make charitable contributions, FWP is in the initial stages of setting up a foundation which, among other things, would provide a vehicle for corporations to make donations to the agency. Montana State Parks should begin working with the foundation from its inception to ensure that state park needs are fully incorporated into the organization's mission. Another aspect related to the foundation is working with state-wide or local support groups to raise funds for particular projects or types of work.

**3) Foster Additional Legislative Support:** The Legislature appropriates funds and controls the ability to spend them. The Parks Division must work to improve the understanding legislators have of the value of state parks and what their needs are. Some methods for accomplishing this are as follows:

A) Communication During Non-Session Periods: One way of beginning this would be to work on devising communication channels which are fully operational outside the few months the Legislature is in session. If information can be conveyed incrementally to legislators when they are not immersed in the chaos of a session, it is more likely to have an impact. A regular newsletter for legislators and park passport holders would be one vehicle for both keeping constituents informed, and help build their long-term support for the goals of the park system. One topic, in particular, that legislators need to be periodically appraised of are the economic benefits of Montana's State Parks.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

B) Establish Legislative Committee: Another potential mechanism is to work on establishing a special legislative committee on state parks. This committee could develop a special expertise in state park issues, and could be an important information source for other legislators during the session.

C) Regional Legislative Contacts: Finally, regional staff could do more to ensure that area legislators (and other politicians) are routinely informed of park-related issues and developments in their area, and are invited to participate in special events and dedications. On controversial issues in particular, it is preferable that a legislator hear something first from an FWP employee, rather than through a phone call from an irate constituent.

**4) Rental Car Surcharge**: This idea has been introduced as legislation previously and failed to pass, but it keeps resurfacing as a potentially viable option. Part of the political appeal of this idea is that it would mainly affect out-of-state visitors. According to the State Budget Director, a 6% tax would generate approximately \$1 million in revenue in 1998 (Penfold 1997).

**5) State Accommodations Tax**: Along with the Montana Historical Society, Montana State Parks were allocated a portion of the bed tax following the 1993 Legislative Session. A portion of this money is also used in a competitive grant program aimed at improving key elements of the state's tourism infrastructure, including natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

It is unknown whether there is political support at this time to change the structure of these programs. However, if the percent of the accommodations tax is raised, state parks should be considered for a portion of the increase for tourism infrastructure improvements, particularly in parts of the state which could benefit from more tourism.

**6) Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (ISTEA) Transportation Enhancements Program**: This funding program--which was initiated as part of the 1991 Federal transportation legislation--funds various types of resource protection and recreation projects along transportation corridors. Of particular relevance to state parks are provisions which allows funding for historical preservation projects, scenic easements, roadway landscaping, and trails. In Montana, this program is called the Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP), and is administered by the State Department of Transportation. Currently, Congress is debating the reauthorization of ISTEA.



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

A second funding program included as part of the ISTEA legislation is the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA). This program--which in Montana is administered by the FWP Parks Division--provides grant money on a competitive basis for motorized, non-motorized, and mixed-use trails. Trails managed by local, state, and federal managing agencies are all eligible for NRTFA funding.

A third ISTEA program which has enabled many states to fund recreation and tourism-related projects along transportation routes is the federal Scenic Byways program. However, since the Legislature has not yet established a Montana Scenic Byways program, the state is ineligible to apply for these funds.

**7) Other Possible Options (with varying degrees of political likelihood):**

- A) Increase General Fund Contribution
- B) Increase Coal Tax Contribution
- C) Increase Fuel Tax Allocations
- D) Restore Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Program
- E) Pass Federal Fish and Wildlife Diversity Initiative
- F) Work to Receive Portion of State Sales Tax (if ever passed).
- G) Ensure that federal Wallop-Breaux Act is reauthorized (at least the same level of support)
- H) Increase User Fees: Some elements of this approach are discussed in the section below.

**Issue: Parks Program Fees**

**Goal:** *Work to maintain a fee system which is equitable, efficient, and adequately addresses the revenue needs of the system.*

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Explanation:** At all levels of government, there has been growing interest in finding ways to ensure that users of public goods and services pay a closer approximation of what they cost to provide.

Among federal public land managers such as the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the BLM, there has been a significant shift toward both increasing fees and expanding the number of fee sites, particularly since an experimental fee program was established in 1996. Early results from the new National Park fee program suggest that most visitors are willing to pay higher fees, particularly if they know additional revenues are being used to directly improve and protect park resources (Helena Independent Record 1998). In addition, recent survey information indicates that 75 percent of State Park Passport holders believe they are getting either a good or very good value for the fees they pay to use Montana State Parks, although this was done before the most recent fee increase (FWP 1998).

One of the main arguments for the new emphasis on user fees is that users have not been paying their share, while the general public has been paying for too great a proportion. Among other things, the drive to eliminate the federal deficit has forced federal agencies to find new sources of revenue. An opposing argument is that the public goods provided by resource management agencies should be broadly subsidized--in the same manner that schools and libraries are--because what is provided is of general benefit to society as a whole, even non-users. Some people feel they should not have to pay to use public outdoor resources. Another aspect of this argument is the need to find ways to make these public goods and services affordable to less well-off members of society.

Both of these perspectives have merit, and they are not mutually exclusive. It seems evident from trends occurring around the country and in Montana, however, that there is likely to be continued pressure to increase and expand user fees throughout government for a wide variety of public goods, including those related to outdoor recreation.

**Objective:** Work toward a fee system which collectively contributes between 30 and 50 percent of Park Program costs (as compared to 21 percent in FY 97), while ensuring that individual fees are reasonable and provide an acceptable cost-benefit balance to users.

**Strategies:**

- 1) **Regular Review of Park User Fees:** State Park user fees were increased for the 1998 season, the first such increase in seven years. The principal types of user fees in Montana State Parks include the following:

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

A) State Park Passport or Daily Entrance Fee

B) Camping Fees

C) Cave Tour Fees (Lewis and Clark Caverns)

D) Smith River Floater Fees

E) Group Use Fees

The user fee structure should be thoroughly reviewed at a minimum of six year intervals (The Six Year Plan could be the vehicle for doing this). A key part of this review should include a comparison to prevailing rates at similar systems in other states. Prior to the increase for the 1998 season, fees at Montana State Parks were among the lowest in the region. The intent is to maintain fees at a rate which approximates what people pay for similar services elsewhere in the region.

A discounted rate for residents is appropriate in certain circumstances, and is incorporated into elements of the current fee structure. The resident discount acknowledges the fact that Montana per-capita income ranks close to last in the nation, and that most non-resident visitors come from states where visiting a state park typically costs more than it does in Montana. All other fee discounts--other than for the economically disadvantaged--should eventually be phased out.

Another long-term goal is to expand utilization of state park passports. According to a 1997 survey, approximately 6% of all adult Montanans own a valid passport, while 36 percent of Montanans who visited a state park during the previous two years have one (FWP 1998). With additional marketing--as well as continually improving the experience people have when they visit a state park--it is likely these figures could be expanded.

**2) Expanded Types of Fee Services:** Many states are finding there is a demand for a wider variety of services in their state parks. Many families, for example, may be interested in staying overnight in a park, but are either not interested in camping or lack the necessary equipment. At selected parks where there is a high level of interest, providing yurts, camping cabins, or camping equipment rentals, for example, would be a way to meet public demand while generating additional revenue.

**3) Concessionaires:** Along with park user fees, existing concessionaire fees should be reviewed and compared to rates in other states at a minimum of six year intervals. As



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

part of the same analysis, new opportunities for concessionaires should be investigated to see if there are ways to better meet visitor demands and generate revenue. Additionally, the pros and cons of having state park staff take over some existing concession services should be examined.

**4) Commercial Use:** At the present time, Montana State Parks collects fees on only a small portion of the commercial use which occurs in the system, mainly Smith River outfitter fees. Commercial users are making a profit by using public resources, yet there are not adequate mechanisms in place to ensure they are contributing commensurately for the impacts they have on these resources.

In cooperation with other interested parties, the Parks Division is currently investigating ways of collecting reasonable fees for commercial uses. Specifically, the Division is in the process of implementing commercial use fees for the Alberton Gorge on the Clark Fork River, as well as placing restrictions on the number of commercial operators who may use that stretch. Another initiative involves attempting to register all commercial users who utilize FWP lands, as part of a first attempt to begin monitoring use; a ten dollar registration fee will be charged parties not already registered through the State Board of Outfitters, not as a money-making venture, but to cover the costs of the registration program. Currently, commercial operators taking parties on guided “nature tours” or boat/float trips pay no fee, nor are they even registered or monitored. In addition to fees and revenue, there are safety, consumer protection, and resource management issues associated with commercial use.

**5) Floater Fees/Licenses:** Currently, the only river where floater fees are charged by the Department is the Smith River. There has been growing recognition that there is not a mechanism in place to allow non-angling, non-motorized river floaters to contribute to the acquisition and upkeep of access sites (anglers contribute through their license fees, while an estimate of motorboat fuel tax receipts is allocated to facilities used by boaters). This is an issue which is much broader than state parks, and would have a larger impact on fishing access sites (FAS).

A site-specific launch fee would be one alternative to consider. Another option would be a water craft registration fee: Unlike many other states, Montana does not have a registration program for non-motorized craft such as canoes and rafts. A third possibility would be a state-wide water access permit, similar to what is required for recreational access to State School Trust Lands. Under this option, FAS users would be required to have either a fishing license or an access permit, the rationale being that license holders have already paid for site acquisition and maintenance.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**6) Special Events and Tours:** The new fee rule developed for the 1998-99 seasons authorizes the collection of fees for special events and tours (in additions to the tours for exiting fee tours at Lewis and Clark Caverns). Selected fees at popular special events (e.g., Bannack Days) should be considered both to generate revenue and manage the number of visitors.

**7) Miscellaneous Fees:** There are a number of services and facilities provided by Montana State Parks which are currently free or offered at relatively low cost to visitors (e.g., firewood sales, showers, special event and tour fees, camping cabins, equipment rentals, various concession fees, etc.). Additionally, in the future there may be opportunities for charging (or increasing) fees for some of the following: campsite reservation (if a system were implemented); additional fees for "prime" campsites in high demand; and differential fees based on camper size.

**8) Low Income Reductions:** The Division will investigate ways of ensuring that state parks are affordable to all potential users. Currently, there is a camping discount for senior citizens, but nothing similar for low income users who aren't seniors. Prior to the next fee rule, the Division should research this issue and draft a list of potential alternatives for consideration by the FWP Commission. In developing alternatives, existing cost breaks should be examined to see if they are providing useful social benefits.

**9) Periodic Free Entrance Days:** Free entrance days are currently offered on a park-by-park basis, the exact days determined regionally. These days can be a useful means for stimulating interest in visiting parks among people who might otherwise not come. Additionally, free entrance days provide an opportunity when low-income Montanans can visit a park without paying. There may be some merit in establishing a state-wide free entrance day for all parks, which could provide a useful mechanism for promoting state parks on a state-wide basis.

**10) Non-Compliance with Fees:** At some sites, there is substantial non-compliance with existing fee rules, resulting in a significant amount of lost revenue. The Division needs to continue working with the Enforcement Division to aggressively address this important issue; an incentive approach should be examined as part of this analysis. Prior to implementation of the next fee rule, an analysis should be done to determine compliance with the new state park and FAS fees implemented in 1998.

## **Administrative**

### **Issue: Parks Program Staffing**

**Goal:** Work to secure adequate staffing for the Parks Program.

**Explanation:** Montana State Parks lack sufficient staffing to provide the services desired by visitors, especially compared to similar systems elsewhere in the country. According to the Annual Information Exchange published by the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD), only three state park systems in the country have fewer full-time staff members than Montana--Vermont, New Hampshire, and North Dakota. Whereas Montana had 46 full-time employees in FY 1996, neighboring states such as Idaho (138), Wyoming (67), Utah (248), South Dakota (105), and Colorado (187) had substantially more full-time staff support for their systems. When full-time, part-time, and seasonal workers are added together, only two states in the country have fewer employees in their system (NASPD 1997). In addition to the 41 unit state park system, Montana State Park staff are also responsible for maintenance and operations of a fishing access site system with more than 300 sites.

A large part of the challenge is that state government in Montana, in general, is very small compared to many other states. It is often very difficult to get legislative authorization for more full-time equivalent (FTE) employees; the Division's ability to address staffing issues is severely limited by existing political realities. The problem is compounded by the fact that Montana state government pay rates are very low compared to most other states, as well as the federal government, making it more difficult to hire and retain qualified employees. Montana State Parks have aggressively used volunteers and interns in order to offer services which ordinarily could not be provided with existing staff, but these programs can not expand indefinitely, and they can never substitute for adequate professional staffing.

**Objective:** None specified.

### **Strategies:**

**1) Meeting Basic Visitor Needs:** There continues to be a greater demand on State Park employees for visitor services and assistance than can be met with existing funds and staff. These needs range from providing basic visitor information to assisting with large school groups or family gatherings. More "on-the-ground" employees are needed to fulfill these gaps; these FTE needs will be pursued through the Legislature. The public needs to be made aware of areas where staffing shortages exist.



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**2) Living History/Interpretation:** One of the specific needs identified in this plan is improving interpretation and living history offerings. An important step was made in this direction by the hiring of a visitor services bureau chief in the Helena office in 1997. However, additional staffing is needed in order to maximize the potential of the park system in these areas. Working with communities adjacent to parks where programs are presented might be one means of securing funding and support for seasonal interpretive/living history positions, if social and economic benefits to the surrounding areas can be demonstrated by these activities.

**3) Foundation/Association Assistance:** There is considerable untapped potential to work with foundations and associations to help raise funding and support for additional staffing. The proposed FWP foundation might be able to assist in this area, along with the various associations involved in state park issues.

**4) Cooperative Inter-governmental Staffing:** The last ten years has seen increasing degrees of intergovernmental cooperation, at all levels of government. This trend will continue, and along with it, there may be growing interest in sharing positions between agencies which share a common mission.

**5) Economic Study:** An important key to winning legislative support for more staffing is being able to document the substantial positive impacts state parks have on local economies. The last comprehensive economic analysis was done in 1989 (Polzin, et al. 1989). In order to make a more convincing argument that investing in park staff is a sound economic development strategy, more current economic impact information is needed.

### **Issue: Monitoring Visitation and Visitor Experiences**

**Goal:** *Continue to improve the quality of state park visitor experiences through better monitoring and data collection.*

**Explanation:** Sound data on visitation and other topics is critical for good planning and management of recreation sites, and for justification of expenditures. There have been many gaps in the visitation data for Montana State Parks and FAS, making it difficult to piece together trends, or even provide a complete picture of what is happening presently. Data collection has sometimes been put aside under the pressure of more immediate demands; over the long-run, however, poor data collection makes it more difficult to adequately meet visitor needs.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**Objective:** None specified.

**Strategies:**

- 1) Data Collection Committee:** The Parks Data Collection Committee should meet at least once every year to review procedures and make recommendations for improvements. The committee should have a rotating membership.
- 2) Compile Visitation Report:** On either an annual or biennial basis, the Helena Parks Office should compile a report which tracks state park and FAS visitation and other trends.
- 3) Data Collection Consistency:** The Division must continue to work on ensuring that data collection processes are consistent across regions. Consideration should be given to developing a standardized site “report card” for widespread distribution, so that information is comparable from site to site. The report card could be developed so that special site-specific questions could be easily added. In addition to calendar year compilation, certain types of information need to be tabulated by fiscal year, in order to comply with National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD) annual report requirements. Finally, measurement of parks-related outcomes must be integrated into data collection efforts.
- 4) List of Studies:** On an annual basis, the Helena Office will compile and distribute a list of all studies, surveys, and other research which have been done in Montana State Parks for the previous year. Regions should ensure that copies of all relevant studies are sent to Helena upon completion.
- 5) Traffic Counters:** At least one traffic counter will be made available in each park, as these are the key piece of equipment needed for visitor counts.
- 6) Park Management Plans:** Park management plans should discuss site specific data collection needs. While basic information such as visitation is necessary to collect in every park, some parks will have particular data collection needs which are different from other units of the system (e.g., number of cave tours, rental cabin revenues, etc.).
- 7) Sharing Data with Other Agencies:** Federal, state, and local recreation management agencies should work toward improving dissemination of visitation and other data. At the state and federal level, the interagency Montana Tourism and

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

Recreation Initiative (MTRI) could be used as a vehicle to improve information sharing.

**Issue: Programmatic Outcomes, Performance-based Budgeting,  
and Six-Year Plans**

**Goal:** *Fully integrate programmatic outcomes and performance-based budgeting into Division Planning processes.*

**Explanation:** FWP is moving to an agency-wide performance-based budgeting process, with a greater emphasis on measuring outcomes (e.g., the measurable effects of agency actions), rather than mostly focusing on outputs (e.g., the number of products produced or purchased, such as licenses or passports). This shift in emphasis will require major changes in planning processes throughout FWP and the Parks Division.

Along with the greater customer orientation inherent in the outcomes approach, recent changes in the agency have been made to enhance inter-divisional and inter-disciplinary cooperation. In their analysis of agency processes and functions in 1997, Helena Administrative Team (HAT) identified a number of problems which were inhibiting program success, as listed below:

- 1) Programmatic thinking and inter-divisional teamwork within the agency is inadequate.
- 2) Problems are identified, priorities are established, and decisions are made without the benefit of everyone in the agency who should be involved.
- 3) Problems related to decision-making, priorities, and accountability are heightened when coordination responsibility is not clearly assigned.

**Objective:** As a primary way of implementing both a programmatic outcomes approach and 2020 Vision, the Division should complete a new work plan every 6 years.

**Strategies:**

- 1) **Programmatic Inter-Divisional Participation:** Work to institutionalize processes (e.g., program committees or other method) through which other FWP divisions can fully participate in developing Parks Program priorities and plans. Parks Program staff



*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

need to develop the habit of routinely considering the full range of FWP staff that should be included in a project or decision. Similarly, Parks staff need to be encouraged and rewarded for actively participating in programs housed in other FWP divisions.

In 1997, FWP administrators in the Helena Headquarters submitted a list of recommendations to the Director outlining ways to improve programmatic thinking in the agency; Parks Program managers should familiarize themselves with these recommendations, and work to see that they are implemented.

**2) Parks Division Work Team for Six-Year Plans:** A diverse team representing both the Helena Office and the regions should be assembled to assist in preparing the Six-year Plans. The six-year plans must evolve from the broad goals outlined in 2020 Vision. As part of this planning process, the Division should periodically undertake measures to assess effectiveness of programs and activities (e.g., public surveys to track public satisfaction in key areas). The preparation of annual budgets and work plans should be guided by the priorities identified in the six-year plans.

**3) Information Sharing and Training:** In order to ensure that regional staff are knowledgeable about changing budget and planning processes, the Parks Division should work closely with the other Divisions and the Director's Office to develop appropriate training and information sharing mechanisms. Information for the public also needs to be developed and distributed. Opportunities for cross-training with other divisions need to be explored.

### **Issue: Parks Program/FWP Decision-making Hierarchy**

**Goal:** *Work to clarify Divisional decision-making processes and lines of authority.*

**Explanation:** One of the most important issues to emerge from the 2020 sessions at the 1995 Division meeting was uncertainty about the effects of decentralization, and the relationship between Helena and the regions in decision-making processes. Concern about lack of clarity in the Divisional decision-making hierarchy--and its impact on the park system--was also an important issue in the 1989 System Plan. Because many of the issues affecting the Parks Division also affect other divisions, this may be best approached as department-wide initiatives similar to the recently approved programmatic decision-making model.

**Objective:** None specified.

## Strategies:

**1) FWP Programmatic Decision Model:** The Parks Program will utilize the agency-wide decision-making processes developed by the Helena Administrative Team (HAT) and approved in 1997. In summary, decisions were divided into three categories, as follows (see appendix M for more details):

A) Level 1 Decisions: These decisions define, within the limits of the Department's mandate, the scope of FWP's mission and the scope of FWP programs designed to achieve the mission. These decisions are made by the agency Director, typically in consultation with the HAT. An example of a level 1 decision would be an effort initiate, fund, and staff a major new initiative.

B) Level 2 Decisions: These define program direction and allocate resources to accomplish programs. These types of decisions are made by the HAT, typically in consultation with other appropriate divisional work units and regions. An example of a level 2 decision would be determining various levels of programmatic support for an existing program where the focus is being shifted.

C) Level 3 Decisions: These guide program implementation, and are made in the regions, after consultation with affected divisions. An example of level 3 decision would be a MEPA decision notice, signed by the regional supervisor, to proceed with a typical capital project.

**2) Regional Supervisors:** Work with the other divisions and the Director's Office to further clarify the most appropriate role of regional supervisors, particularly in respect to Division Administrators. The role of the Division Administrators is often defined as a program and policy focus, while the Supervisors' realm is implementation. However, this is not always the case, as there are still programs which have not been effectively decentralized from Helena to the regions or, in other cases, from regional offices to the field. In other instances, regions may be involved in policy and program decisions with state-wide implications, which require a broader perspective.

**3) Helena-Regions Communications:** Continue to work on improving communication between Helena and the regions. The experiment started in 1996 of having Helena Parks staff spend several days doing field work in the regions is one vehicle for doing this; it has proven successful, and should be continued. However, a mechanism is needed to bring field staff to Helena to complete the communication loop.

*Chapter IX: Looking Toward 2020*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

**4) Parks Division Meeting:** The biennial division meeting is a useful means for sharing ideas between parks staff members throughout the state, and should be continued; participation by selected staff from other divisions should be encouraged. The quarterly managers' meetings are also an important vehicle for information exchange between Helena and the regions; alternating between "live" and MetNet formats for these meetings appears to work well, as the difference in format provides opportunities for different levels of participation. Again, staff should work to see that park managers meetings are conducted in a more programmatic fashion, with broader involvement from throughout the agency. Conversely, parks staff should participate broadly in other functions throughout the agency, as appropriate.





# X

## MONTANA STATE PARKS POLICY STATEMENTS

The following draft policy statements, organized by category, are intended to guide management decisions involving Montana State Parks into the twenty-first century (also, see appendix N). In some cases, there is overlap with the direction discussed earlier in the Plan.

Underlying all the policy statements is the basic mission of Montana State Parks, which are managed for the primary purpose of conserving special components of the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources, for the enjoyment and education of Montanans and their visitors. An additional benefit of state parks is a contribution to the economic development of local communities and the state as a whole, primarily through tourism.

### Recreation

#### **Hunting**

1) State parks are closed to hunting except for those circumstances identified in section 3 of this policy. Signs informing the public of the particular state park hunting, firearms discharge, or archery equipment rule will follow the FWP *Sign Manual* and will be placed near park entrances and as otherwise appropriate. Safety zones must be marked at least during hunting seasons. In no case will hunting be allowed in state parks lying within community jurisdictional boundaries.

2) Definitions.

- A. "Department" means the state department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).
- B. "Director" means the director, FWP.
- C. "State Park" means an area managed by FWP for outdoor recreation, historic or cultural preservation, public education, and which is listed in FWP's *Montana State Park Brochure*.
- D. "Hunting" means to pursue, shoot, wound, kill, chase, lure, possess, or capture, or the act of a person possessing a weapon, as defined in 45-2-101, or using a dog or a bird of prey for the purpose of shooting, wounding, killing, possessing, or capturing wildlife of this state in any location that wildlife may inhabit, whether or not the wildlife is then or subsequently taken. The term includes an attempt to take by any means, including but not limited to pursuing, shooting, wounding, killing, chasing, luring, possessing, or capturing.
- E. "Depredation Hunting" means special conditional hunting approved by the director to control wildlife populations that exceed carrying capacity and are damaging the

natural or cultural environment, or are causing depredation to private property as a result of closure.

- F. "Safety Zones" are those lands and waters, within state park boundaries, that are closed to the discharge of firearms and archery equipment, and closed to hunting as posted.

3) The director may allow hunting in a state park or portion thereof if the state park meets one or more of the following conditions:

- A. Hunting has historically occurred in that state park, or was included in the original intent of the park land purchase.
- B. Depredation hunting upon recommendation and documentation of FWP biologists and/or game wardens where game populations exceed carrying capacity and are damaging the natural or cultural environment, or causing depredation to adjoining private lands as a result of closure.
- C. Not part of a safety zone.
- D. Hunting does not conflict with and is compatible with state park purposes and does not create unsafe conditions for state park visitors as determined by the appropriate state park manager.

4. The director may restrict hunting in a state park or portion thereof if hunting conflicts with or is not compatible with state park purposes, and causes unsafe conditions for state park visitors as determined by the appropriate state park manager.

5. If newly acquired lands are added to a park, if a new park is added to the system, or if the uses of a park significantly change, a specific evaluation, involving public input, will be made and the director will decide if, or under what conditions, hunting is to be allowed. Public input will include notice of proposed action and the opportunity for public comment on the advisability and acceptability of the proposal.

*(Note: The hunting policy was developed upon request of the FWP Commission. It was tentatively adopted by the Commission in early 1998, prior to a formal public review period.)*

## **Playground Equipment and Family Activities**

Where demand exists, parks will look at providing family-oriented activities and recreational equipment (i.e. playgrounds, horseshoe pits, volleyball courts, etc.) as long as these activities and facilities are compatible with the resources and ambiance of the site, there is overnight camping or the site is urban, and safety of visitors can be assured. It is important to provide a diversity of recreation opportunities for people of all ages, including children.



## **Recreational Conflicts**

An attempt will be made to avoid recreational use conflicts by separating conflicting uses with spatial or temporal zoning, or by fostering certain types of behavior or ethics which will lead to compatibility. Many conflicts can be reduced through education, management practices, and appropriate site design.

Users groups will be invited to collaboratively work together to solve problems. The department will continue to work toward more equitable regulations so that one recreation type doesn't have undue negative impacts on another.

Montana State Parks may, in some cases, limit the ability of concessionaires to sell, rent, or lease recreational equipment or other products which add to user conflicts, or are otherwise considered inappropriate for use in the park.

FWP has limited authority over water-based recreational conflicts, except for health and human safety; legislation would be required to significantly expand this authority.

## **Trails and Off-Road Recreation**

Motorized and non-motorized uses are allowed on all park roads where automobiles are allowed, if compliance is met with existing state regulations. No off-road motorized use is allowed in parks except for administrative purposes (e.g., fence building, weed control, etc.), and then only if other means are impractical.

Montana State Parks are open in their entirety to hiking and cross-country skiing, unless specifically prohibited. Mountain biking and equestrian use are not allowed on hiking or skiing trails. Biking and equestrian use off of park roads are generally discouraged in Montana State Parks, and should only be allowed on trails designed and designated for that purpose, if it can be shown that on-trail compliance can be controlled, resource degradation will not occur, and safety can be maintained. Use of this type will be tried on a park by park, experimental basis only. If resources degradation occurs or off-trail use cannot be managed, these trail uses will be terminated until these factors can be responsibly handled. There should be no trail use of this type in sensitive cultural, historic, pre-historic or natural areas.

Skateboarding and in-line skating will be allowed on a case-by-case basis if safety can be assured, proper protection gear is worn, and user conflicts (i.e., with autos, hikers, etc.) can be avoided. Activities will be allowed only in areas approved by individual park managers, and privileges will be revoked if regulations and appropriate ethics are not followed.

## **Resource Protection**

### **Maintaining Historic Character**

As much as possible, parks staff will honor the historic character of historic and cultural sites when conducting day-to-day business, maintenance, and site operations. For example, if no modern vehicles are allowed in a portion of the park, parks staff should honor this--particularly during peak visitation periods--and find appropriate, non-vehicular ways to meet operation and maintenance needs. This is especially important in cases where the public is asked to adhere to these types of guidelines. Individual parks will need to address this issue in site management plans.

### **Stabilization and Repair of Historic Structures**

The operating philosophy behind caring for historic structures will be stabilization and repair, rather than restoration or reconstruction (modeled after the preservation adage--"better repair than replace, better replace than restore, better restore than reconstruct"). This strategy of "arrested decay" extends the life of structures, while minimizing risks to historic integrity.

Restoration or reconstruction will be undertaken only if other primary structures in the park have been stabilized, and the enabling legislation and/or historic site management plan provide rationale for modifying a building through restoration or reconstruction (e.g., a degree of reconstruction may be helpful to more adequately interpret the history of a structure, area, or site). Historic structures can be retrofitted to serve park administrative or housing purposes when doing so fits the above policy and the park's management plan.

### **Resource Protection vs. Recreation Development**

Recreational development will be based on public demand, in balance with resource protection. Protecting sensitive and rare resources will take precedence over recreation use. However, often a small portion of a resource base must be utilized to allow the public to appreciate and enjoy the rest of the site. Closing all sites would do the most for resource protection, but the loss of public support and the chance to learn about resource values would result. This could lead eventually to loss of political support for protection. In most cases, appropriate balances can occur to meet both objectives. Sustainable recreational use is the operating principle in Montana State Parks.

## **Staff and Administrative Issues**

### **Lodging of Employees**

Lodging of employees on-site will be kept to a minimum in order to keep costs down and to not take up park area that can be used by the park visitors. Permanent residences will only be established in areas where it can be shown that on-site year-round presence is needed for security of facilities and resources (e.g., Bannack State Park). Seasonal residences can be established only if it can be shown that housing for these temporary or seasonal employees is not available at an affordable level locally; it should not be provided simply as a convenience. Residences that are established must be designed to be compatible with the park design and aesthetics, and should be hidden from the public's view as much as is practical unless used as an entrance station.

### **Interns**

Interns should be utilized for special projects which would not otherwise be accomplished. The intern experience should be educational in nature, and a defined product must be produced for the benefit of the student and the department. All interns must be obtained in concurrence with current policy guidelines for this program. Interns cannot replace FTEs, but should complement them.

### **Volunteers**

It is the policy of state parks to maximize the use of volunteers for all aspects of parks operations as long as quality control, adequate supervision, and training can be provided. Training on handling volunteers effectively will be a high priority for all employees utilizing volunteers. Volunteer host pads should be provided at as many sites as possible (even primitive sites) if needed to offset costs of caring for sites and meeting customer expectations.

Volunteers should not replace FTEs, but should complement them and produce work not otherwise possible.



## **Law Enforcement Approach**

Parks need adequate law enforcement to protect the visitor experience, to assure visitor and employee safety, to protect valuable and often irreplaceable resources, and to ensure compliance with regulations. Although this is often not glamorous work, it is essential to a healthy park system. It is unlikely that this can be provided by full-time certified park rangers due to FTE constraints, even though this would be optimum. Good enforcement must be provided with a mixture of options (e.g. TIPMONT/VIPMONT, local sheriffs and city police reserve forces, game wardens, part-time or seasonal park rangers, volunteers, ex-officio, etc.).

The Park Ranger is expected to demonstrate good judgement and a balanced approach to tasks and visitor contacts. The ranger should project an image as a helpful friend to the visitor, knowledgeable about all aspects of the park, as well as capable and willing to enforce park laws. The normal visitor contact should promote a positive exchange. However, if a serious situation calls for specialized enforcement to keep the peace or protect visitors or resources, the Park Ranger is expected to display the proper training and judgement to respond appropriately. This could include requesting additional help (game wardens or local law enforcement) to assist, or even take the lead in extreme or life-threatening circumstances when assistance is not readily available.

The amount and type of equipment displayed by a park ranger (or any law enforcement officer) is often perceived as a level of authority. The initial contact with a park ranger is not meant to be intimidating to the average visitor. On the other hand, all personnel should present a professional image, be well trained, prepared, and have adequate equipment at their disposal to accomplish their duties. Highly visible, regular patrols are often necessary in a park setting to help deter potential unlawful behavior, in addition to random patrols which are more suited to detect such activities.

The training and issuance of “alternate use of force” items and communication equipment such as “pepper” spray, handcuffs, and hand-held radios or cell phones should be a priority. The carrying of firearms by park rangers is currently restricted by statute but should be re-evaluated periodically for possible legislation, if it can be shown that being armed would better serve the demands of the job, and the expectations and safety of visitors.

## **Safety of Parks Program Employees in Threatening Situations**

Most interactions between state park employees and the public are very positive, but there are rare cases when problems or disagreements arise. In extreme instances, threats or other types of abusive behavior toward Parks Program employees will not be tolerated, and should be

*Chapter X: Montana State Parks Policy Statements*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

reported to the proper authorities immediately. Parks Program employees or volunteers are not expected to subject themselves to potentially unsafe or hostile conditions involving interactions with the public in a state park or other setting.

If employees or volunteers feel threatened verbally or physically, they should feel free to end the interaction at any time and seek whatever law enforcement help they feel they need. If--in the opinion of park staff--there is an unacceptable level of intimidation, verbal abuse, or the threat of violence at a public meeting or any other type of public forum, the employee(s) in charge should state their concerns about the situation to the participants. If the situation does not improve, staff should feel free at any time to end the meeting or interaction, and calmly but firmly explain the reasons why to the participants.

### **Parks Employees Serving as Officer of Organizations**

To avoid conflict of interest--both perceived and real--no park employee will be allowed to serve as an officer of parks friends groups, conservation groups, or user groups where actions could be construed as affecting key decision making. This should be examined on a case-by-case basis, but generally friends groups, snowmobile and OHV Clubs, the State Parks Association Board, etc. are examples of inappropriate groups for involvement as an officer.

### **Staffing**

Montana State Parks lack sufficient staff to provide adequate site and resource protection, visitor services, and interpretation. However, staffing numbers are largely controlled by the Legislature, not FWP. Parks should continue to strive to increase staff levels to improve resource stewardship and visitor services. Staffing levels recommended by the State Parks Futures Committee in 1990 are still valid goals.

### **Partnerships**

Given the difficulty in obtaining tax dollars for state parks and recreation, partnerships are essential to the health of the state parks system. These include partnerships with the private sector, local governments, other state agencies, tribes, and the federal government. Any partnership developed should be maintained only if there is net benefit to state parks financially, politically, or in resource protection; quality of service cannot be sacrificed for the sake of any partnership.

## **Naming Sites or Components of Sites**

Naming new parks or lands will be done with FWP Commission approval, must be acceptable to both the state and regional offices, and must comply with the Department-wide site-naming policy. This may be precluded by the wishes of a donor or seller. The name should reflect on the theme of the site, and--as appropriate--take into consideration factors such as name recognition for visitors.

Naming buildings or park components may be appropriate, particularly if a large private donation makes a structure possible. The Commission should also approve the naming of any large new buildings. Naming other components should be avoided if possible, except where it can be shown that the park and its visitors will benefit, and there will be no significant opposition.

## **Park Operations and Management**

### **Long-Term Fee Policies**

Long-term fee policies will not discriminate against family participation, encourage youth visitation, make parks affordable to low-income visitors, remain competitive with adjacent state prices, and not undercut private business where potential overlap could occur for similar services.

Montana State Parks will work toward eliminating existing discounts (except early bird passports), with the intent of eventually developing a fee structure which makes state parks more affordable to low-income visitors, irrespective of age.

The long-term goal is to ensure that fees cover at least 30% of operational costs. Fees will generally be correlated with the quality and/or quantity of services provided at parks, or with limited-entry opportunities.

### **Commercial Use of Parks**

There will be no commercial use of the parks without written consent and a concession agreement. Profits must be shared with the park to compensate for the private use of a public resource. Concessions must not degrade or interfere with park character, purpose, and



*Chapter X: Montana State Parks Policy Statements*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

resources, and must enhance the park experience for visitors. Concessions must be reasonably priced so as to not unduly exclude visitors. Concessions and commercial use must be shown to be cost efficient compared to park employees running the services. The approach that best meets public needs, minimizes impacts on park resources, returns the most net dollars to the park, and satisfies other relevant criteria will be used.

### **Refunds/Compensation for Bad Experiences**

If a visitor or group of visitors has a bad experience in a state park, compensation may be offered as a means of turning a negative into a positive.

The type and amount of compensation should be at regional discretion. Examples include refunding the visitor's money, providing a free weekend at any state park, or even giving out a free passport, depending on the situation. If the causes of the dissatisfaction are a FWP mistake, the compensation offered should be higher. Some situations may be beyond the control of FWP, but compensation should still be seriously considered as a way to promote good will.

Exceptions to the above could occur in cases where a customer knowingly violates the law, is clearly and blatantly lying, or is abusive to parks employees.

### **Advertisements in Parks/Signing**

Sign "pollution" should be avoided to preserve park aesthetics. Signs should be located appropriately for their purpose, and should contain just enough information to relay a message. Signs should be consistent in color and design throughout the system, except that entrance signs should have individual character and fit the theme of the park. Signing should be concentrated, where possible at entrance areas, on kiosks, or near restrooms. International symbols should be used where possible. No signs should be tacked to living trees, shrubs, historic buildings, or geologic or prehistoric features. No "homemade" signs are allowed.

Parks should not appear commercialized. If advertisements are needed or acknowledgment of donors is required, they should be discreet, on bulletin boards or in restrooms. They should not negatively or noticeably impact park aesthetics or views. No billboards or political advertising are allowed in state parks.

There is a detailed sign manual which provides a more comprehensive coverage of design policy.

## **Dogs and Other Pets**

There are sound health, safety, and resource reasons for banning pets at certain times, in certain areas, and in particular parks. Where pets are allowed, they must remain on a leash or other restraining device at all times. No pets are allowed on beaches for health reasons.

At parks where pets become an issue, an attempt should be made to accommodate them during the off-season, or in a separate pet walking area. If human health issues arise at a particular park, pets will be banned. Trained and leashed dogs used by people with vision or hearing disabilities are an exception to the above, and are allowed in all portions of parks which are openly accessible to the public.

## **Relationship Between User Fees Collected and Budget Allocation**

Priority for budget allocation will be given to parks where fees are collected, and will approximately correlate with total collections. However, priority statewide demands or extraordinary needs at one or more primary parks may necessitate shifting dollars based on priorities and common sense. Compliance rate incentives need to be established to reward parks which have a pro-active approach to fee collection.

## **Weed Management**

Aggressive weed control in state parks remains a high priority. Completed regional weed management plans and EAs will be implemented in cooperation with county weed boards. Educational aspects of weed control will become part of the interpretive message of each park, as appropriate.

## **Mosquito Spraying**

Spraying for mosquito control at a private special event in a state park is acceptable if approved by the regional parks manager and done in an environmentally acceptable manner. The cost must be assumed by the private party.

## **Maintenance Standards**

More work is needed to develop solid standards and park-specific guidance for state parks maintenance. This process has been started for FASs (when complete, FAS standards might be adapted for use in designated “primitive” state parks). Standards will assure consistent quality of experience and customer satisfaction, and will help justify budget expenditures. The objective is to have state park maintenance standards in place within five years.

## **Safety**

There is a comprehensive safety policy for Montana State Parks, which is considered adequate.

## **Burial or Spreading of Cremated Remains**

Burials and spreading of cremated remains will not be allowed at state parks. Rare exceptions might be made through petition to the FWP Commission, if it can be shown that there is historical and/or interpretive significance to the burial/ash spreading, or some other extremely compelling rationale. No monuments to deceased persons may be erected without approval from the FWP Commission.

## **Privatization**

Privatization of state park functions will be considered only if it can be shown to be cost-effective (with lower net expenses than if the department provided the service), and can be done without jeopardizing park resources or its primary reason for existing. There must also be majority public support for the action, and the quality of customer services and experience must be maintained at the existing level or better. Currently privatized functions should be turned over to FWP staff if it can be demonstrated that the latter can perform them more efficiently, assuming FTE is available and necessary approvals are obtained.



### **Maximum vs. Optimum Use**

Optimum rather than maximum use will be the guideline for site carrying capacity. Exceptions will include cases of unusually high use (i.e. July 4th, Memorial Day, etc.), where maximum use limits may be used as long as irretrievable resource damage does not occur.

This principle also applies to development: If, for example, use can be increased by removing trees--negatively impacting the ambience of the site--it is better to stay with current capacity and close the site when it is full. That is not to say that trees can never be cut to accomplish important site goals, but this should be minimized; impacts should be mitigated elsewhere in the park.

### **Film Making/Commercials**

In general, these activities can be allowed if there is no permanent harm to park resources, if the activity is at least cost-neutral, if staff can accommodate the activity, if visitor experiences are not significantly impaired, and if some form of interpretative, educational, or marketing benefit can be achieved. A more comprehensive film policy for Montana State Parks has been completed, and is considered adequate at this time.

### **Recycling**

At all high volume day use sites and at every campground, visitors should be given the opportunity to participate in recycling, especially if a re-cycling outlet for pick-up is nearby or can be arranged at the park. Volunteers, friends groups, and local civic clubs should be encouraged to administer these programs under the direction of the parks staff.

### **Planning and Design**

#### **Buffer Zones/Acquisition/Park Protection**

Staff will seek to protect critical inholdings and buffer zones needed to preserve the state's investment in state parks and their resources. This protection will be achieved by fee acquisition, easements, management agreements, or trades, and should be made in advance of impending impacts. A parks acquisition fund will be needed to accomplish this goal. Without any action, some state parks will be rendered incapable of meeting public needs or

*Chapter X: Montana State Parks Policy Statements*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

expectations. Threats to parks and potential future acquisitions are discussed earlier in this document.

### **Breadth and Viability of the State Park System**

In order to preserve the state park system's viability, there will be no more net loss of state park sites. That is, no sites will be traded or lost without at least equal gain of an additional park. The loss of park units during the late 1980s and early 1990s reduced the size and coverage of the system to the point where continued reduction would threaten the integrity of the system.

This does not imply that sites must be eliminated to add new sites. In fact, an acquisition fund should be established to help the Division work cooperatively to begin filling the gaps in system coverage identified in this document.

The size of the current park system is not adequate to meet the needs of a growing population and increasing numbers of visitors, resulting in growing pressure on state park resources. In order to preserve the quality of visitor experience and maintain resource integrity, the system will need to expand to help redistribute use in the face of increasing demands, but current funding and staffing levels are inadequate to accomplish this.

Parks need to be more equitably distributed in relation to Montana's citizenry and geography, and many aspects of Montana's cultural and natural history are not adequately protected or interpreted. "State parks are the appropriate manager for many of these needs. Decision makers need to be encouraged to invest in state parks, particularly in areas which are becoming economically depressed.

### **Management Plans**

Every park will develop a park management plan which is in concert with this strategic document. These plans must cover development and management comprehensively, and be done jointly--from start to finish--with Helena planning staff, and in consultation with other FWP programs, so that the final product can be jointly approved by the statewide and regional staffs. Six-year plans will guide budget allocation and must comply with management plans. Major enhancements will not be conducted without these plans in place.

## **Utilizing Design Tools for Resource Protection**

Montana State Parks will be proactive in utilizing creative design and development to protect park resources and enhance visitor experience. In some cases, protecting resources will involve utilizing a variety of site protection tools such as berms and rip-rap which manage natural forces such as erosion to protect important park features. In other cases, there are ways to utilize innovative design mechanisms for managing visitors and recreational activities in a ways which minimize impacts on the environment, reduce conflicts, and preserve the quality of visitors' experience.

## **Public Involvement**

The Parks Program is committed to actively involving the public in decision-making wherever appropriate. The Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) provides the general guidance for public involvement procedures followed by the Program.

## **Visitor Services**

### **Education and Interpretation**

Interpretation should reflect the park's purpose and primary resources, as detailed in enabling legislation, a management plan, and/or research.

The amount of interpretation and the range of methods used should be limited only by staff and other resources, and should employ a variety of imaginative formats. Good interpretation should be targeted to a range of audiences. In general, living history, seminars, craft demonstrations, workshops, and interactive tours have all been underutilized in Montana State Parks. Interpretive staff should consider the use of all media, but programs should tailor the medium to the park's particular themes, resources, and needs.

Park interpretation should encourage an appreciation for the park's reason for existence, inspire an interest in learning more about the topics covered, and foster a sense of respect for preserving natural and cultural resources in their original setting.

Good interpretation is necessarily selective; it can not teach everything there is to know about a park and its resources. The intent is to help visitors understand how places, resources, and



*Chapter X: Montana State Parks Policy Statements*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

artifacts help tell a natural and historic story, and to spark them to seek more information through books, films, other sites, etc.

State parks should be considered outdoor classrooms, equipped to accommodate school children and adult learning wherever possible. Each park will eventually have a basic vehicle developed for educational use by students (e.g., curriculum/learning trunk, interactive computer program, etc.).

Tours--which are one component of education and interpretation--will be provided as staff are available, as interest dictates, where public safety can be assured, and for an additional cost over and above typical user fees. Tour themes should have an interpretive and educational emphasis, and must be in line with the department goals and vision, and mission of the park. Tours may be privately run where appropriate guidelines and policies are satisfied. Park staff will review tour content for accuracy and appropriateness.

In the past interpretation was one of the first budget elements to be targeted for cuts; this will no longer be the case. Interpretation and education are as valuable to visitors as many other services provided in Montana State Parks.

Vulnerability of signs and other interpretive materials to vandalism is a concern--and emphasis should be placed on summer seasonal opportunities--but providing year-round self-guided interpretation is also valuable and should be explored where appropriate.

Interpretation and educational opportunities in Montana State Parks are intended to be fun, an important component of an enjoyable recreational experience.

### **Special Events**

Special events will follow the same basic guidelines as detailed under the "interpretation" policy statement. There will be an educational, interpretive, or recreational purpose to each special event that fits or complements the park's mission, as outlined in a management plan or similar document. Events should not result in any irreparable resource or facility damage, nor create unsafe conditions for visitors.

It is not the intent of state parks to make a net profit for an event, unless designated as a special fund raising activity; the fees collected at a (non-fund raising) special event will be expected to cover only the non-volunteer costs of the event.

All special events should involve local communities, friends groups, and volunteers.

## **Swim Areas/Lifeguards**

Swimming areas should be provided when public safety can be assured. However, swimming should be at the swimmers own risk. Adults with children should be responsible for them and not depend on parks staff. Lifeguards will not be provided; they will be phased out in the park where they exist (Lake Elmo) within five years. For health reasons, showers will be provided at all parks with designated swimming areas, as funding allows. Proper signing where hazards occur and swimming is not allowed will be established, with advice from legal counsel.

## **Group Use**

Group use should be allowed only where there is public demand, where there is adequate space, and where it does not conflict with individual and family use. Generally, group use should be secondary to other traditional park users.

Where appropriate, improvements can be made (i.e. shelters, restrooms, game areas, etc.) to enhance the experience. Fees should at least make the group use cost-neutral.

## **Customer Service**

The goal of each park experience will be to meet or exceed the visitor's expectations. (If this does not happen, see the refund/compensation policy.)

## **Restroom Use for Non-paying Guests**

Park restrooms will be made available for drive-by traffic at no charge. The person (or people) using the restroom must go directly to the facility and leave the park immediately afterwards. If visitors under this circumstance stay for picnicking or other activities, they will be charged day use fees.

## **Appropriate Improvements and Visitor Services**

Improvements will be provided which enhance visitor experiences, are desired by visitors, and don't harm park resources, assuming there is adequate space, funding, and staff. Appropriate improvements and visitor services will vary considerably from site to site, and are limited at some sites by primitive park designation.

Services provided in Montana State Parks should be necessary for park users of all ages and abilities to enjoy a safe, wide-ranging experience, without the service distracting visitors from seeing and enjoying the park.

In general, Montana State Parks provide an experience which is somewhere in the middle of the continuum between the relatively primitive experience at most USFS or BLM sites, on the one hand, and much more developed private opportunities. These parameters may have to be adjusted in the future if necessary to finance the park and keep it open to the public, although this situation is not on the foreseeable horizon.

Generally, services that can be readily obtained from nearby private sector vendors should not be provided (e.g., laundromats, cable TV hookups, etc.). Depending on the site and visitation characteristics, however, facilities such as showers and restrooms, might be appropriate. Services should be compatible with park character and purpose, and should assist visitors in enjoying the primary park resource attractions.

Visitor/nature centers may be established on or near sites which have a significant resource attraction, and which can be utilized to tell an important and compelling interpretative message. A visitor/nature center may be established if the site has sufficient local public and educational support, if it doesn't duplicate similar opportunities, is compatible with the site character and theme, and does not harm the resources for which the park was created. The current focus, however, will mainly be on enhancing existing centers and maximizing their potential.

## **Competition with the Private Sector**

State parks are beneficial to tourism and local economies. New services are provided at parks when they are desired by visitors. If the services were available in close proximity to the park, they wouldn't be demanded by large percentages of users. Parks continue to use private concessionaires where appropriate, and keep prices equal to or higher than the private sector for similar services (i.e. cabin rental). Park staff routinely send many visitors to nearby local



*Chapter X: Montana State Parks Policy Statements*  
*2020 Vision for Montana State Parks (Draft)*

businesses, especially when they seek higher levels of service which the park can't supply. Providing campgrounds, R.V. dump stations, showers, toilets, boat ramps, and similar services are legitimate functions of most state parks with overnight facilities and high traffic volumes.

Many state park systems have resort lodges, golf courses, restaurants and other businesses which help pay for parks operation, maintenance, and development. As detailed earlier in this Plan, Montana has one of the most primitive and least developed state park systems in the country. Attempting to restrict a park from reaching its customer service potential would likely do more unintended harm to local economies than help them.

State parks provide experiences which are inherently very different from those offered by private sector recreation providers, and the relationship between the two tends to be more complimentary than competitive. State parks--along with the impressive array of federally owned lands in Montana--are key attractants which draw visitors to the state and keep residents here, providing tremendous benefits to the private sector in particular and Montanans as a whole.

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## **XII APPENDICES**

- A) List and Description of State Parks
- B) Public and Agency Scoping Period Results
- C) State Parks Attitude Survey Results (those not included elsewhere in Plan)
- D) Planning Term Definitions
- E) Description of Funding Sources
- F) 1998-99 State Park Fee Rule
- G) Generalized List of Special Events
- H) List of Accessible Sites
- I) List of State Park Friends Groups
- J) Excerpts from Five Year Montana Strategic Plan for Travel and Tourism
- K) Plant and Animal Species with Special Status in Montana State Parks
- L) Draft Outcomes and Performance Measures for Trails and Watchable Wildlife
- M) FWP Helena Administrators Team Decision-Making Model
- N) Miscellaneous Parks Program Policies





## **APPENDIX A:**

### **List and Description of Montana State Parks**



# **MONTANA STATE PARK DESCRIPTIONS AND LOCATIONS**

## **ACKLEY LAKE                      454-5840**

Ackley Lake, named after an early settler and frontiersman, offers diverse water sports opportunities. The lake provides good angling for 10 to 15 inch rainbow trout. (17 miles west of Lewistown on U.S. 87 to Hobson, then 5 miles south on Secondary 400, then 2 miles southwest on county road.)

## **ANACONDA SMELTER STACK 542-5500** (No Direct Access)

This historic stack is one of the tallest standing brick structures in the world, towering 585 feet over the town of Anaconda. There is currently no public access to the site, so the stack can only be viewed from a distance. (In Anaconda on Montana 1.)

## **BANNACK                              834-3413**

The ghost town of Bannack was the site of Montana's first major gold discovery in 1862, before becoming the state's first territorial capital in 1864. The main street is lined with historic structures that recall Montana's formative years. (5 miles south of Dillon on I-15, then 21 miles west on Secondary 278, then 4 miles south on county road.)

## **BEAVERHEAD ROCK                      834-3413** (Day Use Only)

Sacajawea recognized this huge landmark, resembling the head of a swimming beaver, while traveling with Lewis and Clark in 1805. (14 miles south of Twin Bridges on Montana 41.)

## **BEAVERTAIL HILL                      542-5500**

Beavertail Hill includes a half-mile of frontage on the Clark Fork River. Visitors enjoy fishing and camping in the shade provided by a stand of river cottonwoods. (26 miles southeast of Missoula on I-90 to Beavertail Hill exit, then .25 miles south on county road.)

## **CHIEF PLENTY COUPS                      252-1289** (Day Use Only)

This site preserves the home of Plenty Coups, last chief of the Crow Indians. Plenty Coups' log house and store remain as evidence of the chief's efforts to lead the Crow toward a



peaceful co-existence with all people. Park includes a museum/visitor's center. (1 mile west of Pryor on county road.)

**CLARK'S LOOKOUT** 834-3413  
(Day Use Only)

This outcrop above the Beaverhead River provided the Lewis and Clark Expedition with a view of the route ahead. (In Dillon on I-90 at Montana 41 exit, .5 miles east, then .5 miles north on county road.)

**COONEY** Summer: 445-2336  
Winter: 252-4654

This irrigation reservoir is one of the most popular recreation areas in south-central Montana. Attractions include good walleye and rainbow trout fishing. Boating and camping opportunities are abundant, and the Beartooth Mountains loom in the distance. (22 miles southwest of Laurel on U.S. 212, then 5 miles west of Boyd on county road.)

**COUNCIL GROVE** 542-5500  
(Day Use Only)

Council Grove is the site where the Hellgate treaty was signed, which established the Flathead Indian Reservation. The park preserves the location of the 1855 council between Isaac Stevens and the Flathead Kootenai, and the Pend d'Oreille Indians. (In Missoula on I-90 at Reserve St. Exit, 2 miles south on Reserve St., then 10 miles west on Mullan Rd.)

**ELKHORN** 449-8864  
(Day Use Only)

The ghost town of Elkhorn comprises the remnants of a silver mining boom in the 1880s. At its peak, the town's population was 2,500 people. Elkhorn State Park includes two of the remaining buildings from the old town. (I-15 at Boulder exit, 7 miles south on Montana 69, then 11 miles north on country road.)

**FLATHEAD LAKE**

Flathead Lake is located between Kalispell and Polson on Highways 93 and 35. This beautiful lake is renowned for boating, sailing, fishing, camping, and swimming. The park's six units offer public access to portions of Flathead Lake. One of the units--Wildhorse Island--is accessible only by boat.

Flathead Lake is the largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi River, and was dredged out by receding glaciers during the Wisconsin period of glaciation. The Lake is 38 miles long

and between 5 and 15 miles wide. Encompassing 188 square miles at an elevation of 2,892 feet, the lake's maximum depth is 339 feet, with 185 miles of shoreline.

**Big Arm Unit**                      Summer: 849-5255  
   Winter: 752-5501  
   Reservations: 755-2706

Located on Flathead Lake's Big Arm Bay, this park is a popular jump-off point for boat trips to Wildhorse Island. Big Arm's long pebble beach is popular with sunbathers, and Canada geese watchers. (12 miles north of Polson, on U.S. 93.)

**Finley Point Unit**                      Summer: 887-2715  
   Winter: 752-5501

Finley Point is located in a secluded, mature conifer forest near the south end of Flathead Lake. Lake trout and yellow perch fishing are often excellent. Slips are available for boats up to 25 feet long, along with campsites with the capacity for 40 foot RVs. A boat pump-out station and overnight boat slips (including utilities) are also available. (11 miles north of Polson on Montana 35, then 4 miles west on county road.)

**Wayfarers Unit**                      Summer: 837-4196  
   Winter: 752-5501

Located near the resort town of Bigfork on the northeast shore of Flathead Lake. A mature mixed conifer forest makes this site very pleasant for camping and picnicking. Visitors can also enjoy a beach, wildflowers, walking trails, and the best sunsets in the valley. Trailer and boat sewage dump stations are available at this park. (.5 miles south of Bigfork on Montana 35.)

**West Shore Unit**                      Summer: 844-3901  
   Winter: 752-5501

West Shore is located in a mature forest overlooking Flathead Lake. The park's glacially-carved rock outcrops give spectacular views of Flathead Lake and the Mission and Swan Mountain Ranges. Fishing and boating are popular at this park. The campground is located above the rocky lakeshore in a fir, pine, and larch forest. (20 miles south of Kalispell on U.S. 93.)

**Wild Horse Island** 752-5501  
(Day Use Only)

One of the largest islands in the inland U.S., this primitive park is noted for its endangered palouse prairie plant species and incredible wildlife. Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mule deer, songbirds, waterfowl, bald eagles, and wildhorses make this 2,163 acre island their home. Boat access via Big Arm is carefully regulated. (Access from Big Arm via boat.)

**Yellow Bay Unit** 752-5501

Located in the heart of Montana's famous sweet cherry orchards, this park includes a walk-in tent area, Yellow Bay Creek and a wide, gravelly beach. Visitors enjoy swimming, boating, lake trout fishing, and bird watching. (15 miles north of Polson on Montana 35.)

**FORT OWEN** 542-5500  
(Day Use Only)

This tiny park is a significant part of Montana's frontier history. Built of adobe and logs, Fort Owen is the site of the first permanent white settlement in Montana. (25 miles south of Missoula on U.S. 93 to Stevensville Junction, then .5 miles east of Secondary 269.)

**FRENCHTOWN POND** 542-5500  
(Day Use Only)

This forty-acre, spring-fed lake provides a swimming platform and angling for a variety of warm-water species. A group shelter is available by reservation. (15 miles west of Missoula on I-90 at Frenchtown Exit #89, then 1 mile west on Frontage Rd.)

**GIANT SPRINGS** 454-5840  
(Day Use Only)

Discovered by the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805, this is one of the largest freshwater springs in the nation. Visitors can picnic on the banks of the Missouri River and visit the nearby visitor center, fish hatchery and Rainbow Falls overlook. The popular River's Edge Trail also runs through the park. (3 miles east of U.S. 87 on River Drive, in Great Falls.)

**GRANITE GHOST TOWN** 542-5500

This remote, difficult-to-reach ghost town is "rich" in mining history. For adventurous history buffs, this small park preserves an evocative fragment of the past--the "superintendent's house" and the ruins of an old miners' union hall. (A high clearance four-wheel drive vehicle is recommended to reach Granite. Located approximately 5 miles southeast of Phillipsburg.



Go south on Sansome Road, then east on rough dirt road opposite Center Street. Inquire locally about road conditions.)

### **GREYCLIFF PRAIRIE DOG TOWN**

(Day Use Only)

This lively blacktailed prairie dog community is protected and preserved through the efforts of the Nature Conservancy and the Montana Departments of Transportation and Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Interpretive displays help tell the story of these entertaining mammals. (9 miles east of Big Timber on I-90, at Greycliff exit.)

### **HAUSER LAKE (BLACK SANDY)                      449-8864**

One of the few public parks on the shores of Hauser Reservoir, Black Sandy is an extremely popular weekend boating, fishing, and water skiing take-off point. (7 miles north of Helena on I-15, then 4 miles east on Secondary 453, then 3 miles north on county road.)

### **HELL CREEK    232-4365**

Located on the Hell Creek Arm of giant Fort Peck Lake, this park provides facilities for most water sports, as well as excellent walleye fishing. This is a launch point to the vast and rugged Missouri Breaks area. (25 miles north of Jordan on county road.)

### **LAKE ELMO    Summer: 256-6205** **(Day Use Only)    Winter: 252-4654**

Located on the outskirts of Billings, this 64-acre reservoir is a very popular park for swimming, boardsailing, non-motorized boating, and fishing. The park also features a nature trail which circles the lake, and an accessible fishing pier. (In Billings, U.S. 87 north to Pemberton Lane, then .5 miles west.)

### **LAKE MARY RONAN                      752-5501** **Reservations: 755-2706**

Located on the east shore of Lake Mary Ronan, this 76-acre park is shaded by a forest of douglas fir and western larch. Attractions include fishing for trout, bass, and kokanee salmon, bird watching, huckleberry picking, swimming, and mushroom hunting. (U.S. 93 at Dayton, then 7 miles northwest.)

### **LEWIS AND CLARK CAVERNS                      287-3541**

Located in the rugged Jefferson River Canyon, Lewis and Clark Caverns features one of the most highly decorated limestone caverns in the Northwest. Naturally air conditioned, these

spectacular caves are lined with stalactites, stalagmites, columns, and helictites. The Caverns--which are part of Montana's first and best known state park--are electrically lighted and safe to visit. To avoid peak use periods, call the park for suggested visitation and tour times (19 miles west of Three Forks on Montana 2.)

**LOGAN** Summer: 293-7190  
Winter: 752-5501  
Reservations: 755-2706

Surrounded by a 17-acre mature forest of western larch and ponderosa pine, this park is on the north shore of Middle Thompson Lake. Visitors enjoy swimming, boating, camping, waterskiing, and fishing for rainbow trout, largemouth bass, kokanee salmon, and yellow perch. A trailer sewage dump station is also available. (45 miles west of Kalispell on U.S. 2.)

**LONE PINE** 755-2706  
(Day Use Only)

This 200-acre park offers a visitor center, hiking trails, and an archery range. Scenic overlooks provide views of Flathead Lake and the Big Mountain Ski Area. (4 miles southwest of Kalispell on Foy Lake Rd., then 1 mile east of Lone Pine Rd.)

**LOST CREEK** 542-5500

Lost Creek Falls cascade over a 50 foot drop to provide one of the most scenic and popular spots in the park. Mountain goats, bighorn sheep and other wildlife are frequently seen on the cliffs above the creek. (1.5 miles east of Anaconda on Montana 1, then 2 miles north on Secondary 273, then 6 miles west.)

**MADISON BUFFALO JUMP** 994-4042  
(Day Use Only)

Prior to the introduction of the horse to the Indians of the Northern Great Plains in the mid-1700s, the Blackfeet, Flathead and Shoshone tribes stampeded herds of bison over this precipice in order to secure the necessities of food, shelter, and tools. The top of the jump affords impressive views of the Madison River Valley and surrounding mountain ranges. (23 miles west of Bozeman on I-90 at Logan exit, than 7 miles south on Buffalo Jump Road.)

**MAKOSHIKA** 365-8596

To the Sioux Indians, Ma-ko-shi-ka meant "bad earth" or "badland." In addition to the pine and juniper-studded badlands formations, the park also houses the fossil remains of such dinosaurs as tyrannosaurus and triceratops. Interpretation of the area and displays are included

in the new visitors center. Scenic roads and nature trails offer vistas of the badlands of Makoshika. (On Snyder Avenue in Glendive.)

**MEDICINE ROCKS** 232-4365

Medicine Rocks preserves a rugged and beautiful sample of sprawling eastern Montana. Native Americans came here to contact magical spirits thought to reside among the unique sandstone rock formations. (25 miles south of Baker on Montana 7.)

**MISSOURI HEADWATERS** 994-4042

This park is situated where the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin Rivers converge to form the Missouri River. Missouri Headwaters was a geographical focal point important to early Native Americans, trappers, traders, and settlers. (3 miles east of Three Forks on I-90 at Three Forks exit, then east on Secondary 205, then 3 miles north on Secondary 286.)

**PAINTED ROCKS** 542-5500

This reservoir offers boating, camping, and fishing in the scenic Bitterroot Mountains. (17 miles south of Hamilton on U.S. 93, then 23 miles southwest on Route 473.)

**PARKER HOMESTEAD** 994-4042  
(Day Use Only)

This sod-roofed log cabin is representative of the frontier homes of pioneers who settled Montana. (8 miles west of Three Forks on Montana 2.)

**PICTOGRAPH CAVE** 252-4654  
(Day Use Only)

The Pictograph Cave complex was home to generations of prehistoric hunters who produced ancient rock paintings known as pictographs. A paved quarter-mile interpretive trail loops around the base of a cliff, providing visitors with views of the pictographs. (In Billings on I-90 at Lockwood exit, then 6 miles south on county road.)

**PIROGUE ISLAND** 232-4365  
(Day Use Only)

Sheltered by mature cottonwoods, floaters find this isolated and undeveloped Yellowstone River Island an excellent spot to view wildlife and hunt for Montana moss agates. During low water, a small channel can be forded by vehicle to obtain access to the island from the mainland. (1 mile north of Miles City on Montana 59, then 2 miles east on Kinsey Road, then 2 miles south on county road.)



**PLACID LAKE** 542-5500

Located on the Clearwater River chain, Placid Lake is known for its good trout and kokanee salmon fishing. Interpretive panels provide an account of early-day logging practices. (3 miles south of Seeley Lake on Montana 83, then 3 miles west on county road.)

**ROSEBUD BATTLEFIELD** 232-4365  
(Day Use Only)

This is the site of the June 17, 1876 battle between the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians and General Crook's infantry and cavalry. Rosebud preserves a portion of rolling, eastern Montana prairie. (25 miles east of Crow Agency on U.S. 212, then 20 miles south of Secondary 314, then 3 miles west on county road.)

**SALMON LAKE** 542-5501

Salmon Lake is one of the beautiful links in a chain of lakes fed by the Clearwater River. Fishing, boating, and a variety of other water sports are popular activities in this woodland setting of western larch, ponderosa pine, and douglas fir. (5 miles south of Seeley Lake on Montana 83.)

**SLUICE BOXES** 454-5840

A primitive trail follows an abandoned railroad grade through the scenic, Belt Creek gorge. The trail provides access to numerous stream fishing opportunities, and a nearby ghost town. The trail requires numerous fords, which are possible only during low water. There are no developed facilities at Sluice Boxes (5 miles south of Belt on U.S. 89, then 2 miles west on county road.)

**SMITH RIVER** 454-5840

A 61-mile float trip down the remote Smith River Canyon provides outstanding scenery and excellent trout fishing. There are 27 boat camps along the river from the put-in point at Camp Baker to the take-out at Eden Bridge. In order to help preserve the unique wild quality of the Smith, a reservation and permit are required to float the river; call the number above for more details. (16 miles northwest of White Sulphur Springs on Secondary 360, then 7 miles north on county road.)

**SPRING MEADOW LAKE** 449-8864  
(Day Use Only)

Located on the western edge of Helena, this 30-acre spring fed lake is noted for its clarity and depth. Open to non-motorized boats only, the lake is popular for swimming, sunbathing,

scuba diving, wildlife viewing, and fishing for trout, bass, and sunfish. A nature trail circles the lake. (State 12 West, North on Joslyn to Country Club.)

**STATE CAPITOL GROUNDS** 449-8864  
(Day Use Only)

While this area does not resemble a state park, the formal grounds and flower gardens are visited by thousands of people each year. The capitol grounds include 50 acres around the capital building, Montana Historical Society Museum, and state office complex. (Located in Helena at the junction of 6th and Montana Ave.)

**THOMPSON FALLS** 752-5501

A mature, mixed pine forest makes this 36-acre park cool and private. Attractions include bird watching, fishing, for bass, trout, and ling, nature walks, and boating on Noxon Rapids Reservoir. (1 mile northwest of Thompson Falls on Montana 200.)

**TONGUE RIVER RESERVOIR** 232-4365

The impounded Tongue River provides a 12-mile-long reservoir set in the scenic red shale, juniper canyons, and open prairies of southeastern Montana. Boating and other water sports are popular here. Fishing is excellent for bass, crappie, walleye, and northern pike. (6 miles north of Decker on Secondary 314, then 1 mile east on county road.)

**ULM PISHKUN** 454-5840  
(Day Use Only)

Ulm Pishkun is one of the largest Native American buffalo jumps in the U.S. Rising above the Missouri River Valley, this prehistoric bison kill site has a mile-long cliff over which buffalo were herded. (10 miles south of Great Falls on I-15 at Ulm Exit, then 6 miles northwest on county road.)

**WHITEFISH LAKE** Summer: 862-3991  
Winter: 752-5501

This popular, 10-acre park has a mature spruce/fir forest which contributes to the ambiance of the campground and beach. Boating, swimming, and fishing opportunities are abundant. (1 mile west of Whitefish on U.S. 93, then 1 mile north.)





## MONTANA HISTORICAL STATE PARKS

Montana Historical State Parks are defined as parks established to preserve and interpret sites, buildings, events, persons or objects of statewide or national historical or cultural significance.

**ANACONDA SMELTER STACK** - on Register of Historic Places - One of the tallest standing brick structures in the world at 585 feet. Built in 6 months during the winter of 1918-19, it had, for 61 years spewed smoke during the copper ore smelting process. In September, 1980, the smelter was closed forever, and the stack's presence is the only reminder.

**BANNACK** - a National Historic Landmark - Montana's first major gold discovery was at Bannack in 1862. The first territorial capital of Montana and known for the western history preserved in one of Montana's best known ghost towns.

**BEAVERHEAD ROCK** - on Register of Historic Places - while traveling with Lewis and Clark in 1805, Sacajawea recognized this huge landmark resembling the head of a swimming beaver.

**CHIEF PLENTY COUPS** - on Register of Historic Places - home of Plenty Coups, the last chief of the Crow Indians. The Chief's log home and store remain. A museum displays many of the Chief's personal possessions.

**CHIEF JOSEPH BATTLEGROUND** - a National Historic Landmark - Bear's Paw Battleground where Nez Perce Chief Joseph surrendered to Colonel Miles during battle in 1877.

**CLARK'S LOOKOUT** - on Register of Historic Places - rock outcropping above the Beaverhead River provided the Lewis and Clark Expedition a view of the route ahead.

**COUNCIL GROVE** - location of 1855 council between Isaac Stevens and the Flathead, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille Indians. The Hellgate Treaty was signed at this site. The treaty established the Flathead Indian Reservation.

**ELKHORN** - Fraternity Hall on Register of Historic Places - a one acre park in the mining ghost town. Fraternity Hall and Gillian Hall display early frontier architecture from the 1880's. The town was discovered by a native of Switzerland during the silver boom.

**FORT OWEN** - on Register of Historic Places - first permanent white settlement in Montana. In 1850 the earlier log buildings and walls were transformed into an adobe fort. Fort Owen was the Flathead Agency Headquarters until 1860.

**GIANT SPRINGS** - a National Historic Landmark - discovered by the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805. Is one of the largest freshwater springs in the nation.

GRANITE - Wier House and Miner's Union Hall are on the Register of Historic Places - silver discovered here in 1865. The superintendents (Wier) house, owned by State Parks, is the only masonry residence in this ghost town.

LEWIS & CLARK CAVERNS - one of the most highly decorated limestone caverns in the northwest. The caves are lined with stalactites, stalagmites, columns and helictites. First state park in Montana.

MADISON BUFFALO JUMP - on Register of Historic Places - in mid-1700's, the Blackfeet, Flathead and Shoshone Indians stampeded herds of bison over the precipice to secure food, clothing, shelter and tools.

MAKOSHIKA - badlands with unique formations that house fossil remains of tyrannosaurus and triceratops dinosaurs.

MISSOURI HEADWATERS - on Register of Historic Places - where the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin Rivers converge to form the Missouri River. Was a geographical focal point significant to the Lewis & Clark expedition and important to early Indians, trappers, traders and settlers.

PARKER HOMESTEAD - a sod-roofed log cabin representative of the frontier homes of pioneers who settled in Montana.

PICTOGRAPH CAVE - a National Historic Landmark - images from thousands of years ago of shield-bearing warriors, human-like figures and animals painted on the rock walls by aboriginal people. Significant artifacts have been discovered here.

ROSEBUD BATTLEFIELD - on Register of Historic Places - in 1867 an intense battle between the U. S. Army and the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians waged here. This battle was the prelude to the Indians' victory 8 days later at the Little Bighorn.

ULM PISHKUN - on Register of Historic Places - considered largest buffalo jump in North America. The jump is a mile long and rich in prehistoric and historic artifacts.

National Historic Landmarks are those districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects designated as possessing national significance in American History, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture.

National Historic Landmark properties are automatically listed in the National Register.

National Register of Historic Places are those properties that are significant at the local, state, or national level.

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **Public and Agency Scoping Period Results**





# **STATE PARKS SYSTEM PLAN ("2020 VISION"): COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC SCOPING WORKSHOPS**

The issues below have been combined from all nine public scoping workshops held in 1995, and have been listed in priority order based on voting which occurred at the meetings:

- 1) RV dump stations (30 points).
  - \* Need more dump stations in state parks.
  - \* Work to improve operation of dump stations.
- 2) Protect state park resources (e.g., air, water, quiet--23 points).
  - \* Prevent vehicles from driving below the high water line along water bodies.
- 3) Parks Division should acquire more land (e.g., for new parks, buffer zones, inholdings, viewshed protection--23 points).
  - \* Inventory potential tourist attractions and add to the state park system.
  - \* Virginia City should be a state park.
  - \* Need more state parks in northeastern MT.
  - \* Explore potential for new state park focused on agricultural history in eastern MT.
  - \* Calamity Jane Reservoir should be added to the State Park System.
  - \* Ashley should be a state park site.
- 4) Don't overdevelop state parks (23 points).
  - \* Gravel on roads is OK.
  - \* Retain primitive areas.
  - \* Ensure that quiet spaces are available in state parks.
- 5) Volunteers, civic organizations, and support groups (23 points).
  - \* Involve community residents.
  - \* Use volunteers and civic organizations to support park projects.
  - \* Get park employees to speak at clubs to generate interest.
  - \* Start an "adopt-a-park" program (like adopt-a-highway).
  - \* Improve communication with people interested in volunteering.
  - \* Need more parks support groups.
- 6) Make better use of differential use fees (19 points).
  - \* Charge more for additional facilities people choose to use (e.g., electrical hookups).
  - \* Establish fee for bringing pets into state parks.
  - \* Different fee structure for out-of-state visitors.

- 7) Enhance public ownership of the state park system by increasing awareness and visibility, so parks can be improved, expanded, purchased, etc. (18 points).
  - \* Increase the desire of people to buy parks passports.
  - \* Expand use of all media to provide information about state parks and increase public knowledge.
  - \* Make sure park users know where their fees go.
- 8) School trust lands (16 points).
  - \* School trust lands need to be available for state parks and other public uses.
  - \* Ensure that parkland on leased school trust property is not lost, especially after improvements are made (e.g., Elmo State Park).
- 9) Don't sell parkland; don't allow state park system to get any smaller (14 points).
- 10) Develop parks to meet changing public needs and circumstances. Park management and rules will need to change with increases in use (14 points).
  - \* Need more facilities at parks.
  - \* Need flush toilets in parks.
  - \* Move toward developing a higher quality system (e.g., Washington and Oregon state parks).
  - \* Season should be lengthened.
  - \* Changes need to start now.
  - \* Plan for increased tourism.
  - \* Adopt management strategies (e.g., use limitations) to address increases in use.
  - \* Manage tourists to reduce conflicts with Montanans.
  - \* Changes in site management and design need to reflect new camper technology (e.g., there is more winter camping now due to heated campers, etc.).
- 11) Funding (13 points).
  - \* Explore future forms of park financing.
  - \* Need stable park funding sources.
  - \* Increase funding for full-time equivalent employees (FTE), and operations and maintenance.
- 12) Historical and cultural state parks should be a high priority (13 points).
  - \* Emphasize historic preservation.
  - \* Seek funding sources for historic preservation.
  - \* Do inventory to see if there are elements of MT history which need protection.



- 13) Change parks passport design--no window sticker (12 points).
  - \* Park passports should be attached to person rather than vehicle.
- 14) Use conservation and recreational easements (and other creative tools) to help preserve resources (11 points).
  - \* Protect areas that preserve the "old feel" of Montana (e.g., "don't fence me out").
- 15) Raise park fees (11 points).
  - \* Parks are under-priced.
  - \* Senior citizen fees should be raised.
- 16) Address dog problems (10 points).
  - \* Dogs create health, safety, and welfare concerns in parks.
  - \* Spring Meadow Lake has an especially severe dog problem.
  - \* Increase funding to clean up after dogs.
  - \* Enforce dog leash laws.
- 17) Boat ramp management (9 points).
  - \* Need "rig-up" staging areas at boat ramps.
  - \* Educate people about the need to not block access. Need better information at boat launch sites (regarding length of time people can take to launch, etc.).
  - \* Enforce regulations.
- 18) Keep park opportunities diverse (9 points).
  - \* Increase multiple use within parks.
  - \* There is a place for tents as well as 40 foot RVs.
  - \* Need opportunities for RVs in state parks (mainly a space and layout issue).
- 19) Need expertise to manage and operate a diverse system of parks (9 points).
  - \* Need professional recreation managers.
- 20) Need more authority for attendants, caretakers, and volunteers to enforce rules (9 points).
- 21) Fees charged at specific parks should be able to be used only at those sites (8 points).
- 22) Water skiers come too close to shore and create conflicts with anglers and other users (8 points).
  - \* Expand no-wake area.
  - \* Set water ski times.
- 23) More control of jet skis (8 points).

\* Night use and under-age riders are problems.

- 24) Need to increase camping opportunities in state parks (7 points).
  - \* There are regional shortages of camping spaces (e.g., Flathead Lake).
  - \* Need more campsites at Cooney.
- 25) Campsites should not be held overnight with an empty trailer, etc.--occupants should be present to retain site (7 points).
- 26) Make sure current system can be maintained before it is expanded (7 points).
- 27) Design campsites that are easy to get into and out of (e.g., angle parking--7 points).
- 28) Shorten maximum camping stay in some parks (especially those which are heavily used--6 points).
- 29) Urban parks are an important part of the state park system (6 points).
  - \*Try to focus development in more urban state parks.
- 30) Need level camping pads (6 points).
- 31) Need more caretakers at campgrounds (5 points).
- 32) More government-private partnerships (5 points).
- 33) Gifts should come with support dollars (5 points).
- 34) Fine people who dump waste products on the ground (5 points).
- 35) Improve site and visitor security. Work on reducing vandalism (5 points).
- 36) Need floating boat docks (5 points).
- 37) Need to get families in parks (5 points).
  - \* Develop sites for family camping.
  - \* Need more activities and play areas for children.
- 38) Increase public input into park planning (4 points).
  - \* Generate citizen input for parks planning through advisory committees.
- 39) Trails are an important state park resource (4 points).
  - \* More bike paths.

- 40) Enforce curfew for music, etc. (4 points).
- 41) Prefer campsites near water (4 points).
- 42) Focus on interpretation, education, special events, and curriculum guides (4 points).
- 43) Clarify management responsibilities at Hell Creek State Park (4 points).
  - \* Too many agencies make management confusing to users.
- 44) More gravel on roads at Hell Creek State Park (3 points).
- 45) If reservations are implemented, keep half of the campsites first-come, first-served (3 points).
- 46) Are urban parks appropriate for the state parks system (3 points)?
- 47) Continue purchasing fishing access sites (3 points).
- 48) MT fisheries can not stand current pressure (3 points).
- 49) Don't over-promote (3 points).
- 50) Need clean sanitary facilities (3 points).
- 51) Develop site management plans for each park (3 points).
  - \* Develop use zones in park management plans.
- 52) Inventory and categorize parks in System Plan (2 points).
  - \* Develop "tiers" of parks (e.g., high destination tourist parks, local parks, etc.
  - \* Inventory parks to assess development suitability.
- 53) Don't reduce the number of sites available when campgrounds are improved (2 points).
- 54) Disabled access is too excessive (2 points).
- 55) Park dollars should provide for maintenance of access roads (e.g., Black Sandy access road--2 points).
- 56) Retain Somers Hatchery lake frontage for recreation (2 points).
- 57) Need more and better coordinated special events and programs in state parks (2 points).
- 58) Improve cooperation between the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and



Parks Division for road maintenance (2 points).

- 59) Need tram-like transportation at Lewis and Clark Caverns (2 points).
- 60) Deal with erosion problem at Cooney and other parks (2 points).
  - \* Plant trees.
  - \* Install rip-rap.
- 61) Use college interns to help manage and staff parks (2 points).
- 62) Need more theme parks (e.g., dinosaurs, etc.--2 points).
- 63) Need good state park maps (1 point).
- 64) Privatization of state park services (1 point):
  - \* Does it save money?
  - \* Do employees simply lose benefits and wages?
  - \* Do citizens lose control?
  - \* Do out-of-state concessionaires take over?
  - \* Is privatization economist voodoo?
- 65) Liability (1 point).
- 66) Need more access to Hauser Lake (1 point).
- 67) Resources are needed for preventative maintenance (1 point).
- 68) Coordinate with other agencies in planning and development (1 point).
- 69) Use cooperative agreements to do enforcement in parks (1 point).
- 70) Start campground reservation system (1 point).
- 71) If possible, major new park developments should be made to pay for themselves (1 point).
- 72) Define swimming areas at Cooney more clearly (1 point).
- 73) Balance funding between water and land based parks (1 point).
- 74) Need an alternative location for swimming at Somers (there are safety concerns--1 point).

- 75) Need more access to Flathead Lake (0 points).
- 76) People may not want to use tax dollars to run parks (0 points).
- 77) Too few staff to enforce regulations (0 points).
- 78) More development at Deadman's Basin to take pressure off Cooney (0 points).
- 79) Extend 7 day camping limit (0 points).
- 80) Leave Finley Point cabin intact (0 points).
- 81) Work with Audubon to create bird lists for state parks (0 points).
- 82) State parks should be economical places to visit (0 points).
- 83) Don't forget economic develop focus of state park mission (0 point).
- 84) Develop Cooney for out-of-state tourists (0 points).
- 85) Bed tax shouldn't be charged at state parks campsites (0 points).
- 86) Plant more trees at Hell Creek State Park (0 points).
- 87) Need to monitor human--animal conflicts in state parks (0 points).
- 88) Developed parks versus primitive (0 points)?
- 89) Need better communication between Helena and local communities (0 points).





# **STATE PARKS SYSTEM PLAN ("2020 VISION"): SUMMARY OF WRITTEN/PHONE SCOPING COMMENTS**

Listed below is a compilation of written and phone comments received during the Plan scoping period in 1995. The issues are listed in priority order based on the number of times they were mentioned.

- 1) Dog problems (4):
  - \* Charge a fee for each dog.
  - \* Too many dogs run free in parks; they should be caught.
  - \* Dog owners should be required to clean up after their animals.
  - \* Leashes should be required and limited to 6 feet.
  - \* When a dog threatens a person, the dog and owner should be evicted from the park.
- 2) State Parks staff are doing a good job (3).
  - \* Parks personnel have done an amazing job of stretching money and people so far!
  - \* Montanans should be proud of their parks and the people who make the system work so well.
  - \* Considering the funds available, the Parks Division has done a good job in the past. I hope they continue to do so.
  - \* We've enjoyed many of our State Parks.
  - \* My feeling is that, in general, you folks have done a good job...keep up the good work.
- 3) Chief Plenty Coups improvements (3):
  - \* More staff, including full-time maintenance person.
  - \* Need professionally trained museum staff.
  - \* Playground for kids.
  - \* Sound system for museum.
  - \* Fix problems with water and septic system.
  - \* Need large, covered group use facility, with electricity and water.
  - \* Additional interpretation.
  - \* Paved parking and hard-surfaced trails.
  - \* Park has potential to help increase tourism to area.
  - \* Needs increased marketing and support from FWP.
- 4) Where appropriate, consider more signs, trails, and programs interpreting wildlife and history (3).
  - \* Elkhorn could benefit from more interpretive information.

- 5) Prefer less developed campsites and parks (3):
  - \* Pave roads into parks, but not necessarily the campsite roads and campsites.
  - \* Campers go to camp, not park on pavement (but fix dirt roads around campsites).
  - \* Parks should not compete with the private sector for highly developed "hook-up" sites.
  - \* The Parks Division should shift away from its development direction toward maintaining the parks in a natural, undeveloped condition. This natural condition is worth a lot more than just another developed RV parking lot, which many parks have become.
- 6) State Parks System Plan scoping workshop was worth while (3).
  - \* Appreciated the opportunity to participate.
  - \* The slide show was wonderful; I want to visit some of the sites.
  - \* The overview was very informative. Good job!
  - \* Workshop format was good, but needs to be kept moving along (keeping a check on people who dominate a meeting).
  - \* Meetings could have benefited from better press coverage.
  - \* Had a good discussion...want to see issues raised at meeting developed further.
- 7) Need electricity at Cooney Reservoir (2).
- 8) State parks should be free (2).
  - \* Giant Springs should be free. Local governments could take over part of the maintenance responsibilities.
  - \* Fishing/boat access sites should be free.
- 9) Virginia City should be managed as a state park (2):
  - \* Use Bannack as a model to manage Virginia City.
  - \* Virginia City can't be properly managed by the Federal Government or the private sector.
- 10) Add dump stations to parks where feasible (2).
  - \* Dump stations and showers are available in most state park systems adjacent to Montana.
- 11) Need more improvements on lakes around Billings (2).
  - \* Need more water access close to Billings to ease pressure on Cooney.
- 12) Don't cut down on the number of campsites (2).

- \* The number of campsites on Flathead Lake (e.g., Big Arm) appear to be diminishing: Isn't use increasing?
- 13) Need showers in state parks (2).  
\* Could charge \$2.00 for showers.
- 14) Increase funding for parks as needed (2):  
\* Staff funding.  
\* Support a "travel" tax.  
\* User fees.
- 15) Need more control of jet skis and other motorized recreation (2).  
\* The Harrison Lake FAS site is overrun on most weekends by water skiers and jet boats...preventing fishing either from the shore or from smaller craft.  
\* Unlike those who purchase licenses to fish and fees for overnight camping, they pay nothing for the use of the facilities...vandalism has increased, as well as consumption of alcohol, loud music, and a general disregard for the safety of others.  
\* Possible solutions include the following:  
- A strictly enforced no-wake policy at FAS sites.  
- Requiring operators of all motorized recreational craft to be licensed and insured.  
- Stronger and more effective enforcement of laws governing speed limits (as well as alcohol and firearms).
- 16) Vandalism and enforcement (2).  
\* The duties of wardens should be expanded to include routine and frequent patrolling of urban parks, where vandalism and other crime is more common.  
\* Perhaps the public could be more involved in a caretaking role. Enforcement could always be increased.  
\* Use of FWP facilities for raucous parties results in a significant increase in maintenance and repair as well as the amount of garbage.
- 17) Not in favor of electricity at state parks (2).
- 18) State Park System should gear itself towards providing a diverse, diffuse experience for park users, offering a wide variety of recreational and historical opportunities. This might include the following (2):  
\* Low developed parks.  
\* Mid-developed parks.  
\* "Flagship" parks developed for tourists.
- 19) Need level camping/parking places at Cooney Reservoir (1).



- 20) Desire improvements at Pictograph Caves (1):
  - \* Park has potential to help increase tourism to area.
  - \* Needs increased marketing and support from FWP.
  - \* Needs additional personnel for preservation and interpretation.
  - \* Needs increased capital construction funding.
- 21) Work to enhance public ownership of the state park system (1).
  - \* Educate the public about the wide variety of state parks.
- 22) Impressed with changes at Spring Meadow State Park (1)
- 23) Park attendants should have more authority to enforce rules (1).
  - \* When there is a problem at a park, it takes too long to call a deputy or game warden.
- 24) New site development should allow for today's larger RVs (1).
- 25) Have source of drinking water available at each major park (1).
- 26) Consider fees at some parks which don't have them presently (1).
- 27) State Park camping fees are usually more than U.S. Forest Service sites (1).
- 28) The rate for campers to pitch a tent (as opposed to a camper or RV) at the campgrounds is ridiculous. I have found \$8-12 a night to be very limiting for my family (1).
- 29) Promote historical parks as learning tools for schools (1).
- 30) Consider a historical/cultural park that covers all of Montana's tribal nations (1).
- 31) Don't like passport on windshield (1).
- 32) Require stickers at FAS sites (1).
- 33) Address risk of losing parks on school trust land (1):
  - \* Elmo State Park was leased to private individual, and now it's closed most of the time.
  - \* Use floating docks on school trust sites, so they can be removed if lease is lost.
- 34) Lots of partying at Echo Lake (1).

- 35) Should not be collecting fees at Spring Meadow when the bathrooms are locked (1).
- 36) Like developments at Lake Elmo (1):
  - \* Appreciated amount of public involvement on Elmo.
- 37) Would like to see existing parks developed as destination sites (e.g., Lewis and Clark Caverns--1).
- 38) Need more day use sites, and accesses to rivers, trails, and public lands (1).
- 39) Somers site--hard to get boats in and out with all the swimmers (1).
- 40) Yellowtail Dam/Bighorn Reservoir (1):
  - \* More camping spots.
  - \* More access to the reservoir.
- 41) Tongue River Reservoir (1):
  - \* Have paid to camp for four years and nothing has been done to improve site.
- 42) Park attendants should keep restrooms supplied with toilet paper at all times (1).
- 43) Frenchtown Pond (1):
  - \* Improvements were good.
  - \* Dock was wrecked by teenagers because park wasn't patrolled enough.
- 44) Coordinate with other agencies so people only have to buy one sticker to visit all Montana parks (federal, state, and local--1).
- 45) Families shouldn't need a passport sticker for each vehicle they own (1).
- 46) More campsites at Cooney (1).
- 47) Continue progress on Greenway from Duck Creek to Two Moons--fantastic (1)!
- 48) Need more and better boat ramps and docking areas (1).
  - \* Ramps and docks need improvement in many areas.
- 49) Ban all types of hunting at Pirogue Island (1).
  - \* Afraid to use park when people are hunting.
- 50) Enforce park rules (1):
  - \* Close and lock all gates at 10:00 P.M., as posted. Campers pay for security and a quiet evening. There are too many after-hours disturbances.

- \* Enforce the check-out time at popular campsites.
- \* If park is closed, lock the gate to reduce litter and vandalism problems.

- 51) Don't relocate sites away from water (1).
- 52) Require all day use guests to use day use area unless they want to pay a camping fee (1).
- 53) Do not allow campers to leave sites unattended for more than 24 hours (1).
- 54) Don't allow swimmers, personal water craft, jet skis, etc. to occupy the water around boat ramp areas. Use boat ramps for loading and unloading only (1).
- 55) Explore possibility of volunteer campground hosts (and possibly offer them tax credits-1).
- 56) Finley Point (1):
  - \* Options for cabin:
    - Leave cabin and rent it out.
    - Sell cabin at an auction and have buyer move in.
    - Don't tear cabin down.
  - \* Why was road chip sealed recently? It seemed fine before.
- 57) Wayfarers (1):
  - \* Needs a boat-slip dock.
  - \* Campsites are too far from the water.
  - \* Old pilings and rocks close to boat dock need to be removed.
- 58) Placid Lake (1):
  - \* Trim (but don't remove) bushes along lake so campers can see the water.
  - \* Fix dirt road from the highway into park.
- 59) Salmon Lake (1):
  - \* Connect campsites to day use area and boat launch.
  - \* Put in a boat-slip dock near the campsites.
- 60) Yellow Bay (1):
  - \* Do not turn into day-use only area. Add campsites and a boat launch dock.
- 61) Elmo (1):
  - \* Reexamine and revoke lease, as terms are not being met.
  - \* There are no improvements, no maintenance, and site is now a private beach.



- 62) West Shore (1):  
\* Install boat-slip dock and add campsites along the water.
- 63) Big Arm (1):  
\* Install a dock, with boat-slips or buoys.  
\* Don't move boat dock into shallow water (it's ok where it is now).  
\* Do not relocate or eliminate campsites.
- 64) Hell Creek (1):  
\* Would like to see campground kept open and maintained better.  
\* Like new water system.
- 65) Produce a card for annual admittance to state parks which would also make the holder a member of a "participation" group (e.g., "Park Pals"). The card would allow the holder entrance into any state park, as opposed to the passport, which would enable a vehicle and all its occupants entrance (1).  
\* Card price would be \$15; the vehicle sticker would be an additional \$7.50.  
\* Children under six would be free. Children 7-12 would get a card for \$3. Children 13-17 would pay \$12, which would include a card and vehicle sticker.  
\* Starting at 7, kids begin to exercise considerable spending power, thus they should pay a nominal amount to use their parks (kid admittance would probably be limited to a few urban parks). The childrens' cards should be attractive, since kids seem to be hot on collecting cards of various kinds.  
\* People 65 and older would pay \$10 for a card and one vehicle sticker (and could get a second sticker for \$10).
- 66) Utilize FWP talent to explain mission of state parks and more effectively market them (1).  
\* If hundreds of people and organizations are willing to "adopt a highway" to pick up trash, it ought to be easy to excite hundreds more to "adopt a park."
- 67) I sure don't think much of your system...One can't expect a bunch of bureaucrats to be fair or honest...bureaucrats are only interested in power and robbing people; they want to make slaves out of the common people. The cost of parks is now so high only bureaucrats can afford them (1).
- 68) Abandon "prison gray" uniforms and get more appealing colors (1).
- 69) Move toward smaller, higher-quality, and easier to maintain park system was wise (1).
- 70) Don't acquire any more urban parks--these are local responsibilities (1).
- 71) Canyon Ferry should be a state park again (1):

- \* Currently no enforcement or management.
- \* Severe water safety problems.

- 72) Parks being turned over to private management will not be as available as they have been in the past due to an increase in fees, etc. I would hate to see young families lose the chance to enjoy Montana's parks...to where they become available only to those with incomes above a certain level (1).
- 73) Parks should implement an aggressive program to stop the abuse of FAS by non-residents (1).
  - \* People who pull into our FAS and park the big RV parallel to the river, taking up huge amounts of space and destroying the view and experience...should be prohibited from doing so.
  - \* It wouldn't bother me a bit to see overnight use of FAS for Montana residents only. And even then, there should definitely be a 3-4 day limit in any one FAS.
- 74) Parks should concentrate attention on maintenance of existing parks over future development (1):
  - \* This means picking up garbage, controlling the noxious weeds, and revegetating areas that have been hammered.
  - \* Put park user money into these types of activities, and people will be happy--both park users and their neighbors.
- 75) Parks Division should not concentrate on raising revenues. This has led in the direction of more and more development, which requires a bigger infrastructure to maintain and control (1).
- 76) Parks should not provide electricity and septic systems for park volunteers and campground hosts (1):
  - \* If people don't want to rough it in Montana's parks, they can volunteer elsewhere.
  - \* It is incongruous to have a big RV with lights, water, and septic system sitting in a FAS or state park.
  - \* If FWP feels so strongly about volunteers/hosts, they should contract with local people to keep an eye on the park and park users.
- 77) FWP would do well to concentrate on pleasing Montana residents first, and out-of-staters second (1):
  - \* Residents pay property and income taxes to support many of the activities of state government that out-of-staters simply do not pay for, but use and enjoy.
  - \* Because of this inequity, it is not unreasonable for Montanans to get a break on the use of their own resources in reduced fees, special privileges, etc.

Note: The number of times a particular issue was mentioned in comments is listed in parentheses. Subpoints are listed underneath the main issue; not every person who listed a particular main issue mentioned (or necessarily agrees) with all the subpoints. In many cases, letters have been condensed and paraphrased to save space, but every effort has been made to capture the essence of the comments.





## **FWP COMMISSION: PRIORITY ISSUES FOR INCLUSION IN PLAN**

Listed below are issues identified by the FWP Commission for possible inclusion in the System Plan. The issues were compiled early in the planning process, following an information briefing by the Parks Division Director.

- 1) Fee and funding issues. 15 points
- 2) Protection of Park System natural and cultural resources. 14 points
- 3) Enforcement, safety, and vandalism. 14 points
- 4) Division role in state-wide recreation planning (e.g., trails, river management, etc.). 14 points
- 5) Configuration and organization of State Park System (e.g., Should there be additional categories of parks?, What role do urban parks play?, How does System relate to other recreation resources such as FAS sites, USFS campgrounds, etc.?). 14 points
- 6) Cooperation and partnerships. 12 points
- 7) Development (e.g., should there be more or less? What type? Where?) 11 points
- 8) Use of volunteers, civic organizations, and support groups. 11 points
- 9) Size and coverage of Park System (e.g., Do we need more or less land and units? Are there natural or cultural resources which should be protected in the Park System? Adequate geographic coverage? What criteria should be used to determine these things?). 10 points
- 10) Staffing/FTE. 10 points
- 11) Improved data collection and public involvement (to better monitor satisfaction, track trends and technology, meet user needs, etc). 10 points
- 12) Park information, maps, resource interpretation, education, and special events. 10 points
- 13) Commercial use of sites. 9 points
- 14) Park system marketing and promotion; role of tourism. 8 points

- 15) Facility design and layout. 8 points
- 16) School Trust Land issues (e.g., leases, etc.). 8 points
- 17) Park operations, management, and maintenance. 7 points
- 18) Division/agency organizational structure and decision-making. 7 points

**STATE PARKS SYSTEM PLAN PRIORITIES:  
PARKS DIVISION MEETING  
SEPTEMBER, 1995**

**PRIORITIZED LIST OF TOP 30 ISSUES**

This report summarizes the results from the State Parks System Plan ("2020 Vision") workshops conducted at the Parks Division meeting, held in Billings in September, 1995. The sessions were intended to enlist the entire Parks Division to help identify issues to be addressed in the Plan, as well as develop goals, objectives and strategies for some of the major issues. Issues are listed in priority order according to voting which occurred during the sessions.

- 1) Career ladders--reevaluate staffing, skill levels, grades, position descriptions (PDs), etc (90 points).
- 2) Need additional FTE (due to more visitors, expanding tourist season, FAS responsibilities, increased operations funding, etc.--59 points).
- 3) Parks enforcement (e.g., ranger program, enforcement division, etc.--48 points).
- 4) Decentralization: Division versus regional direction and coordination (43 points).
- 5) Quality of visitor experience (37 points).
- 6) Employee morale (e.g., recognize good employees, goal "E"--34 points).
- 7) Interpretation and education (34 points).
- 8) Lack of knowledge in Helena Office about what happens in the field (29 points).
- 9) Staff and maintenance funding (27 points).
- 10) Encroachment of development along park boundaries/land and resource protection (26 points).
- 11) Define niche (i.e., place and role) of Montana State Park System (24 points).
- 12) Staffing--need to recruit qualified employees (permanent and seasonal), as well as interns (23 points).

- 13) School groups in parks/youth and kids' programs (22 points).
- 14) Adjust management to address changing constituencies, conflicts, social change, and new technologies (e.g., use limitations and other strategies--21 points).
- 15) Non-site environmental threats to parks (e.g., water and air pollution--21 points).
- 16) Visitor and employee safety (20 points).
- 17) River recreation and management--what is Division's role? (19 points).
- 18) Pros and cons of consultant versus in-house work for engineering, etc. (18 points).
- 19) Determine level of impacts (e.g., development, etc.) the environment can handle. Match development to site characteristics (18 points).
- 20) Commercial use (e.g., outfitters, concessions, etc.) of FWP sites. Who, how much, what kind of use (16 points)?
- 21) New parkland acquisitions--expansion of system/fill in missing pieces (16 points).
- 22) Role of fishing access sites (FAS--15 points).
- 23) Capital development process (14 points).
- 24) On-site residence for seasonal workers, other staff (13 points).
- 25) Vandalism (13 points).
- 26) Tougher compliance on construction projects (12 points).
- 27) Design and operations quality standards (11 points).
- 28) Out-of-state travel for training (10 points).
- 29) Archives management--how much is appropriate (10 points)?
- 30) Squatters (9 points).  
Historic preservation (9 points).



## **HELENA PARK STAFF: PRIORITY ISSUES FOR INCLUSION IN PLAN**

Listed below are the priority issues identified by the Helena Parks staff for inclusion in the System Plan. The issues were identified during the early stages of the planning process in 1995.

- 1) Protection of Park System natural and cultural resources. 35 points
- 2) Development (e.g., should there be more or less? What type? Where?) 33 points
- 3) Park operations, management, and maintenance. 31 points
- 4) Enforcement, safety, and vandalism. 30 points
- 5) Size and coverage of Park System (e.g., Do we need more or less land and units? Are there natural or cultural resources which should be protected in the Park System? Adequate geographic coverage? What criteria should be used to determine these things?). 29 points
- 6) Configuration and organization of State Park System (e.g., Should there be additional categories of parks?, What role do urban parks play?, How does System relate to other recreation resources such as FAS sites, USFS campgrounds, etc.?). 27 points
- 7) Fee and funding issues. 26 points
- 8) Staffing/FTE. 25 points
- 9) Improved data collection and public involvement (to better monitor satisfaction, track trends and technology, meet user needs, etc). 23 points
- 10) Park information, maps, resource interpretation, education, and special events. 22 points
- 11) Park system marketing and promotion; role of tourism. 22 points
- 12) Commercial use of sites. 21 points
- 13) Division role in state-wide recreation planning (e.g., trails, river management, etc.). 21 points
- 14) Facility design and layout. 20 points
- 15) Cooperation and partnerships. 20 points

- 16) Use of volunteers, civic organizations, and support groups. 20 points
- 17) School Trust Land issues (e.g., leases, etc.). 19 points
- 18) Division/agency organizational structure and decision-making. 14 points

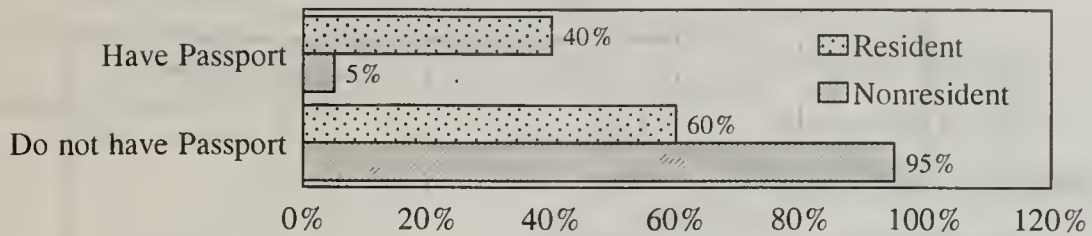
## **APPENDIX C:**

**State Parks Attitude Survey Results  
(those not included elsewhere in the Plan)**



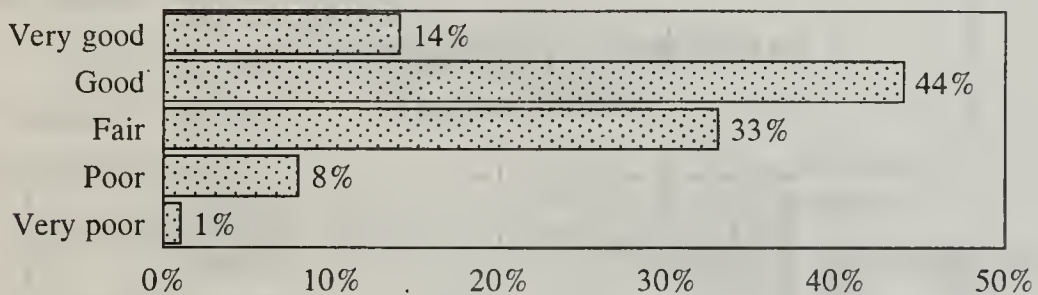


## STATE PARK PASSPORT PROGRAM (onsite survey)



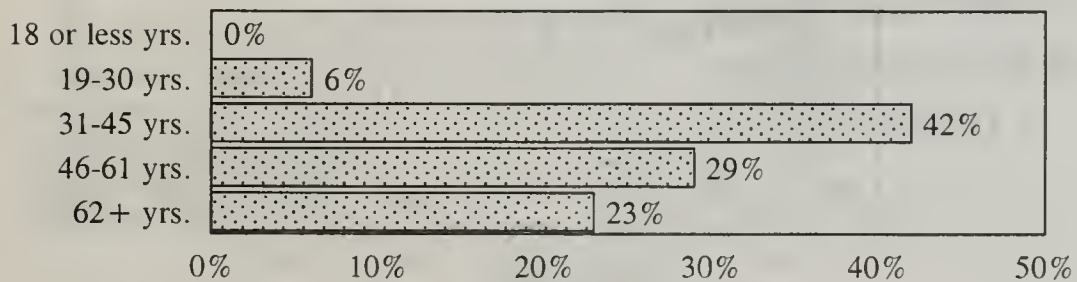
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## ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF STATE PARK PASSPORT HOLDERS (State Park Passport Holders)



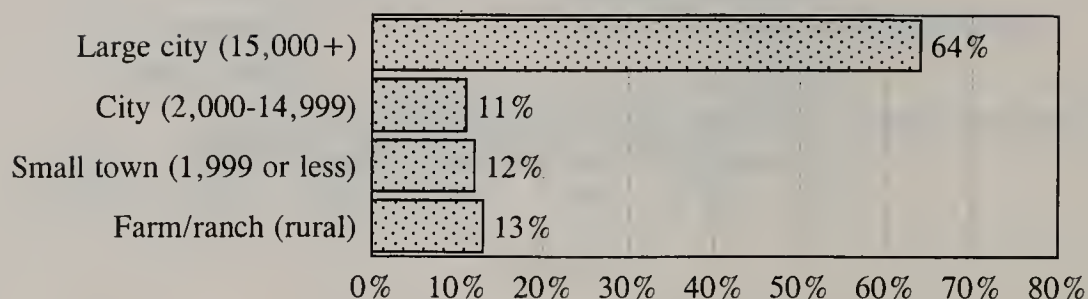
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## AGE OF STATE PARK PASSPORT HOLDERS



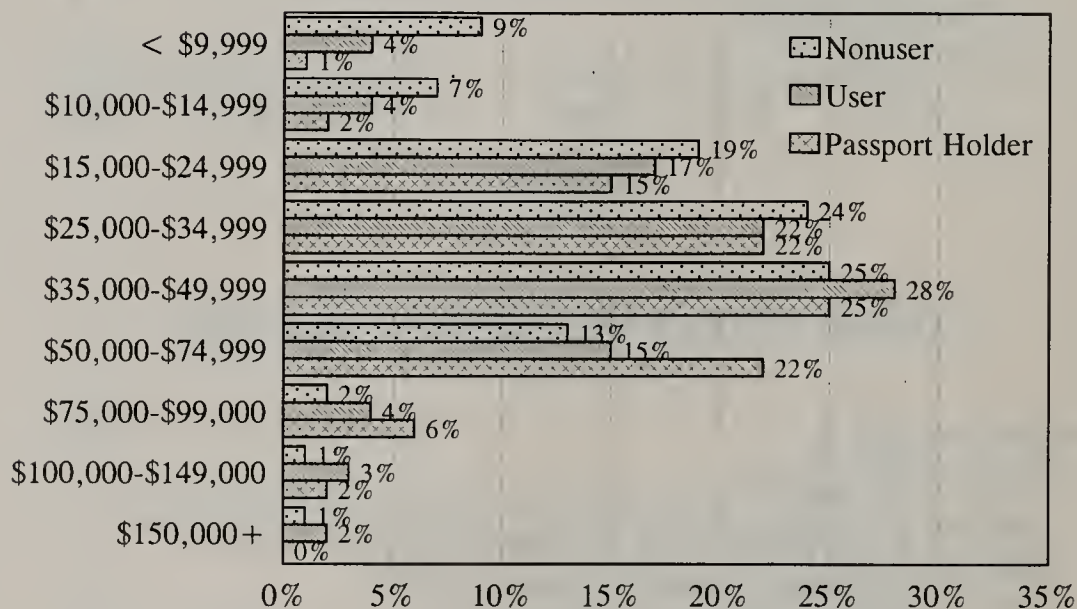
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## PLACE OF RESIDENCE (State Park Passport Holders)



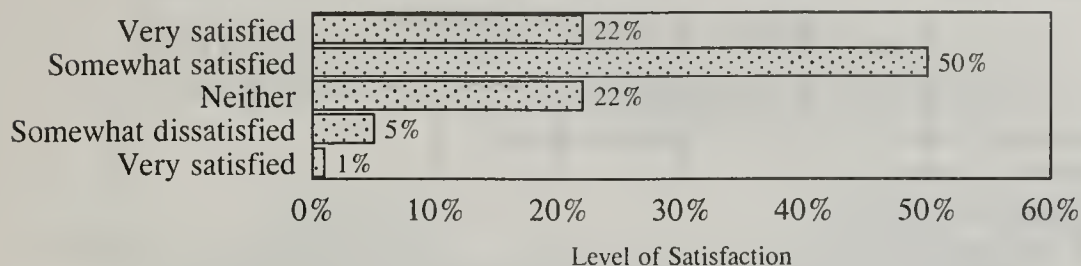
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## HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVELS (mailout survey)



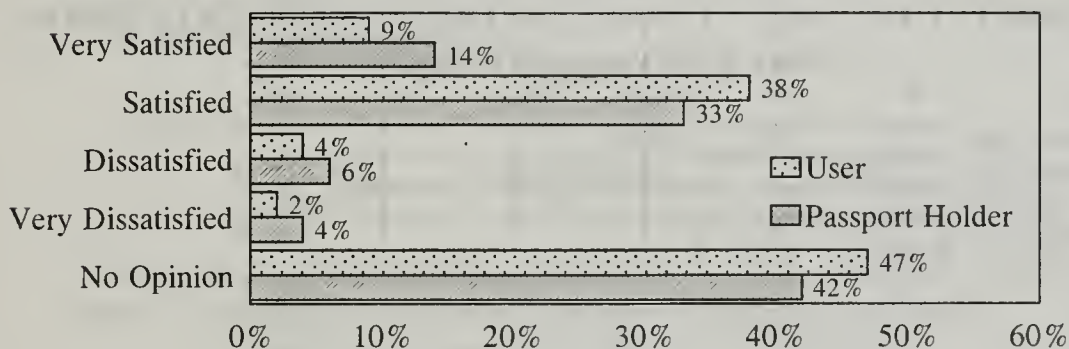
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## RESOURCE PROTECTION AND PROVIDING RECREATION (State Park Passport Holders)



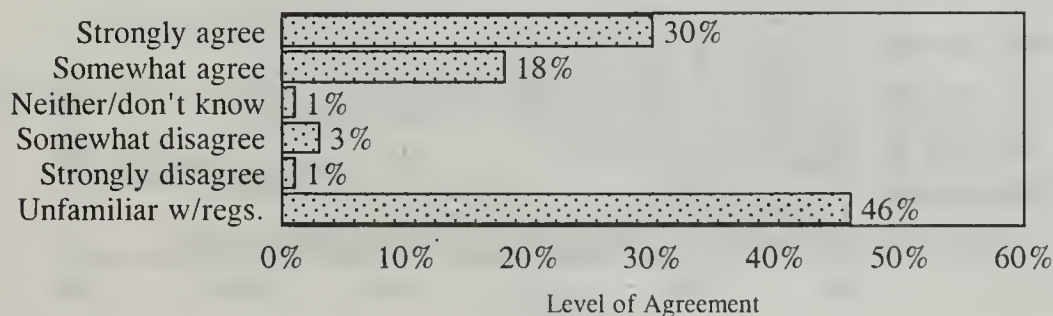
(FWP 1998)

## SATISFACTION WITH LEVEL OF VISITOR USE CONFLICT (mailout survey)



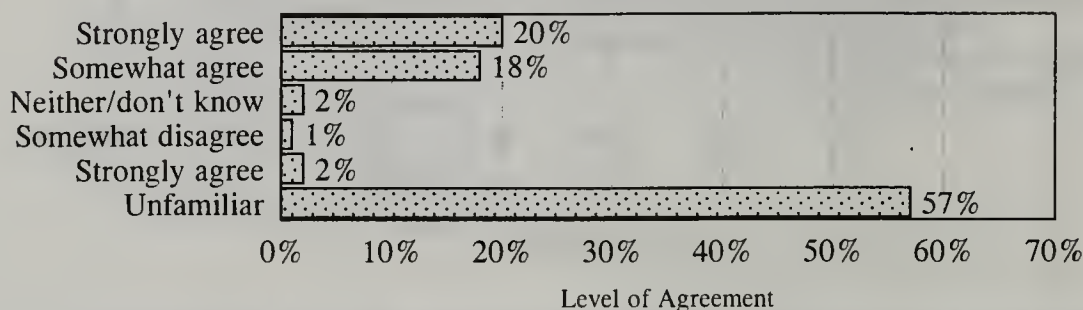
(ITRR 1996)

## STATE PARK REGULATIONS ARE EASY TO UNDERSTAND (Montana Residents)



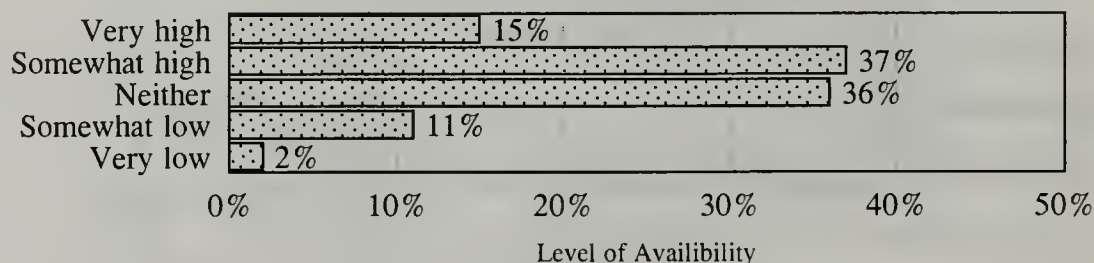
(FWP 1998)

**PARKS INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS:  
ARE THEY TIMELY, RELEVANT, AND INTERESTING?  
(State Park Passport Holders)**



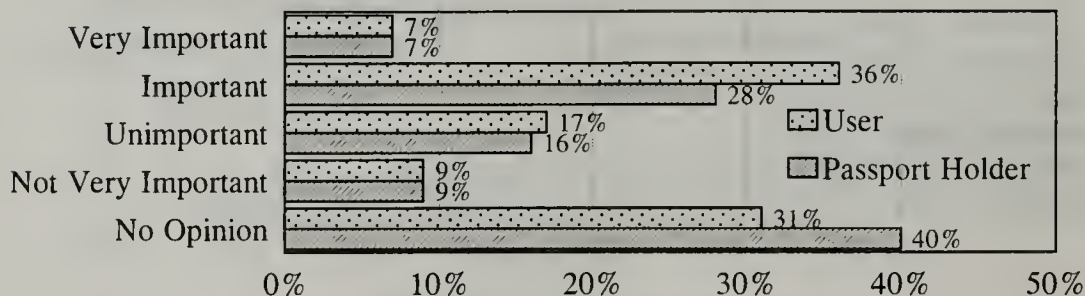
(FWP 1998)

**AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AT STATE PARKS  
(State Park Passport Holders)**



(FWP 1998)

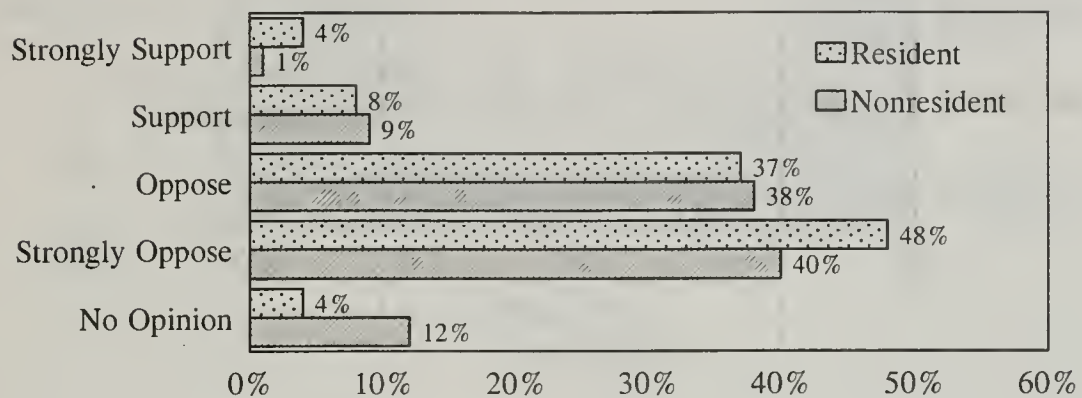
**IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION/INTERPRETATION  
(mailout survey)**



(ITRR 1996)

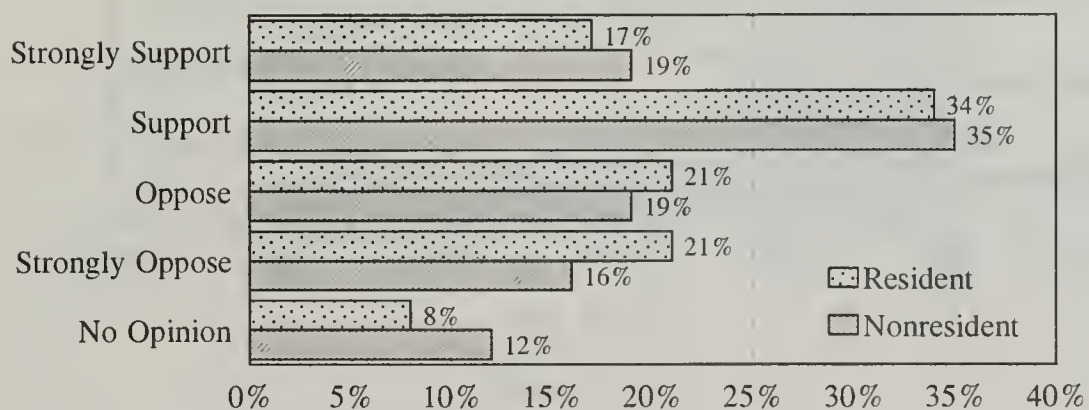


**ATTITUDES ON UNRESTRICTED COMMERCIAL USE  
OF STATE PARKS (OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES)  
(onsite survey)**



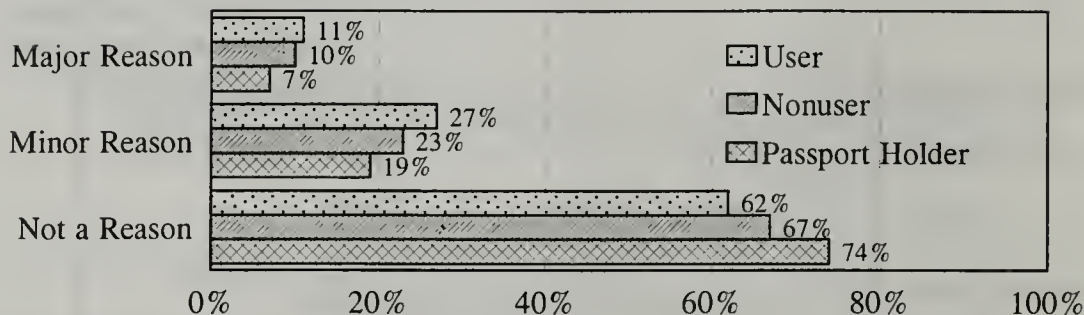
(ITRR 1996)

**ATTITUDES ON STRICTLY CONTROLLED  
COMMERCIAL USE OF STATE PARKS  
(onsite survey)**



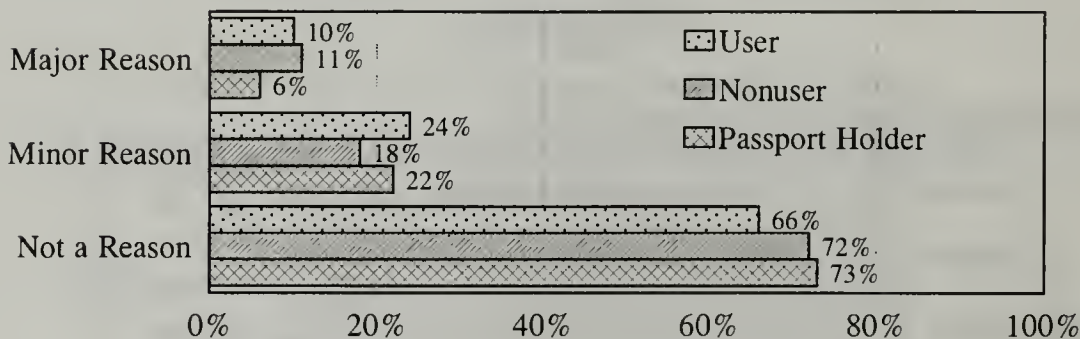
(ITRR 1996)

**REASON FOR NOT VISITING STATE PARKS:  
ENTRANCE/USER FEES TOO EXPENSIVE  
(mailout survey)**



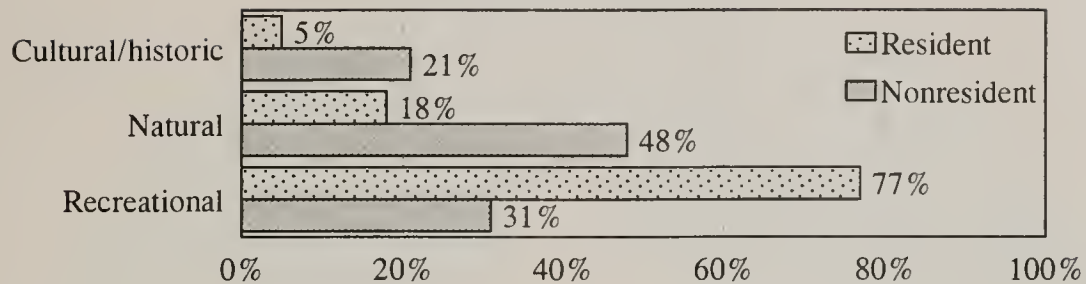
(ITRR 1996)

**REASON FOR NOT VISITING STATE PARKS:  
CAMPING FEES TOO EXPENSIVE  
(mailout survey)**



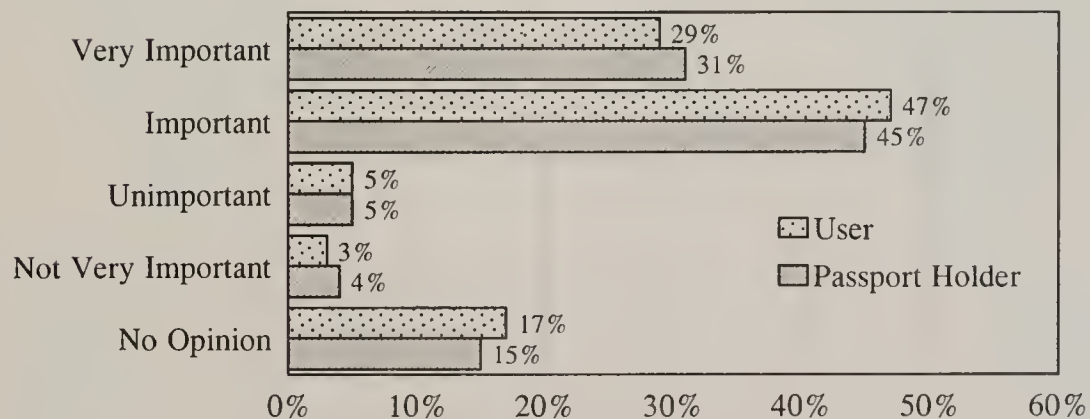
(ITRR 1996)

### TYPE OF PARK USED MOST (onsite survey)



(ITRR 1996)

### IMPORTANCE OF WILDLIFE VIEWING (mailout survey)



(ITRR 1996)



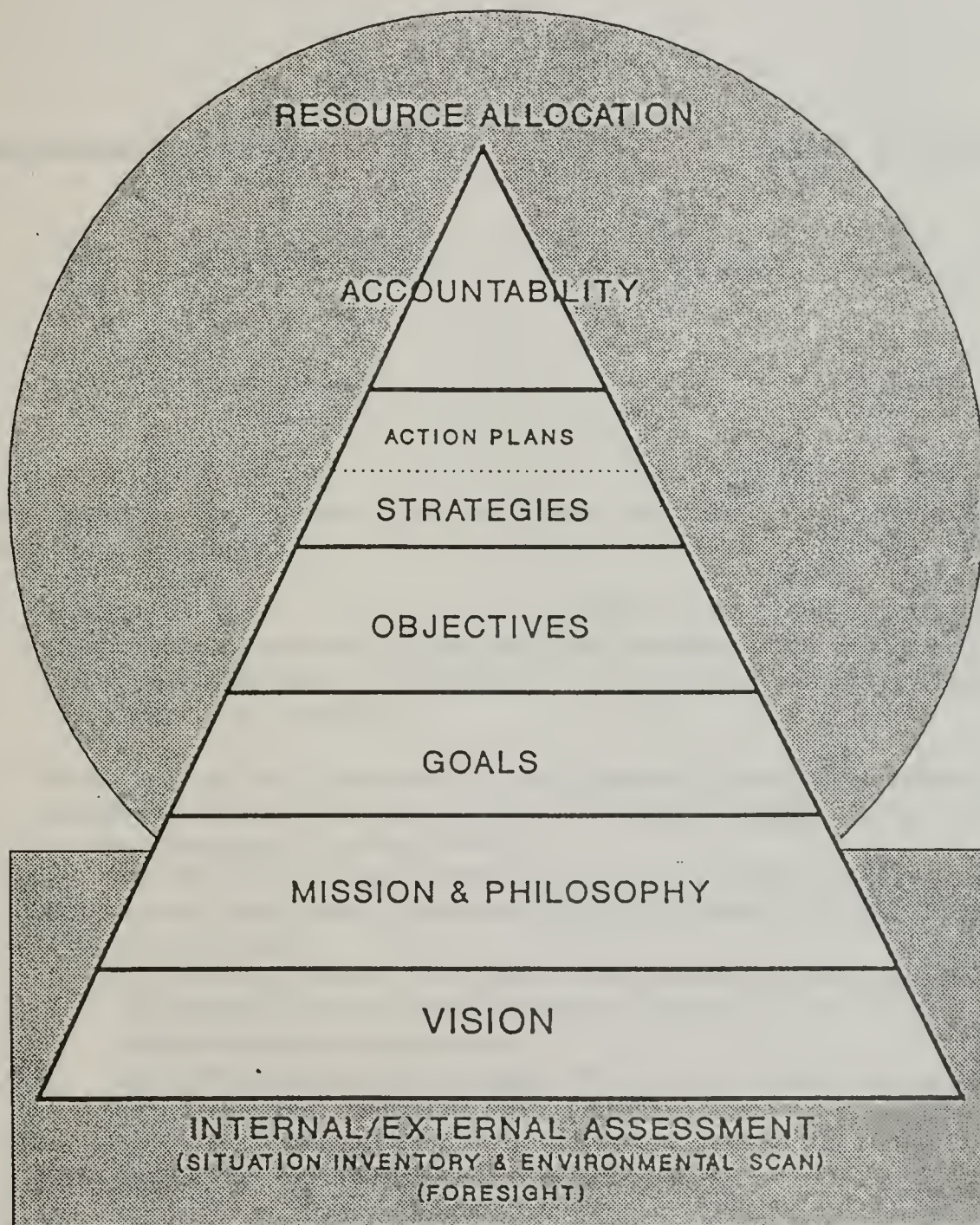


## **APPENDIX D:**

### **Planning Term Definitions**



# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

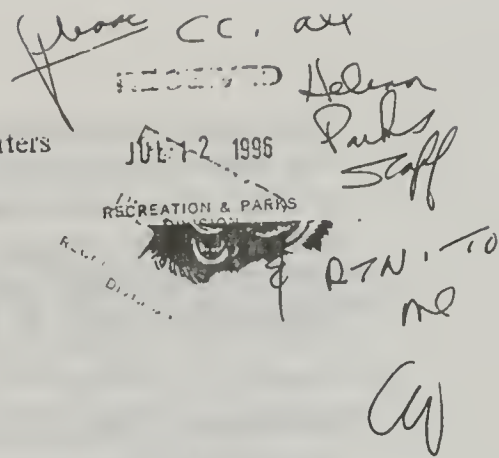






**Montana Department  
of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

Annie Olsen  
Helena Headquarters



**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** July 10, 1996

**TO:** Management Team  
**FROM:** Outcomes Team  
**RE:** Outcomes Model

Attached is a copy of the "Outcomes Model" that we were assigned to prepare. The model includes four related elements:

1. "Managing for Results" is information that we abstracted from a publication related to performance-based budgeting. Within the limited literature related to managing for results, this was the best set of instructions we could find for a reasonable approach to actually developing "Outcomes".
2. The diagram is a visual representation of how "Outcomes" relate to all of the other elements of a successful planning model. In developing this diagram, we discovered four important insights that might be helpful:
  - a) the left side of the diagram tends to be the agency's perspective of its mission;
  - b) the right side of the diagram relates to the public's perspective of the services that we provide;
  - c) goals and objectives are closely related to outputs and outcomes, but they are distinguishable from one another according to whether they arise from an internal or an external context; and,
  - d) the vertical dimension relates program definition (top half of the diagram), to program implementation (bottom half of the diagram).
3. The definitions clarify each of the elements in the diagram.
4. We also have included one set of examples for each of the resource program areas and depicted each of those examples in the format of the diagram. As an agency, we have experienced confusion among goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes. We found

that some of this confusion can be eliminated by paying careful attention to context. An insight that we discovered as we developed the examples is that the apparent lack of clear distinctions between various elements in the diagram can be addressed by specifying scale. A logical flow in the relationship among elements in the sequence is more important than whether each element is correctly worded according to a predetermined format for that element.

5. The outcomes definitions, examples, diagram, and process are submitted with the recognition that determining outcomes is a new and rapidly changing field. The department must continue to research information on outcomes and update the model, based on our expanding knowledge of the subject.

We are available to assist the Management Team, the program committees and other interested department people in the use of this model. Thank you for the opportunity to have worked on this project.

c. Carol Bondy, Mark Earnhardt, Jim Satterfield, Jeff Tiberi, Heidi Youmans

## Managing for Results Model

Managing for Results focuses on program outcomes or results. The traditional emphasis has been on program inputs, or the resources necessary to run a government program. Managing for Results recognizes that agencies need to know what results their programs accomplish, what impacts they have on people's lives, and whether the programs address the relevant issues or solve appropriate problems. The following elements should be considered in determining appropriate program outcomes or results:

### I. Understand the issue or problem

#### A. Define the issue or problem

1. How is the issue described? Who is describing it? What are their biases?
2. What are the facts about the issue or problem? How reliable are the facts? What do the facts suggest?
3. How broad is the scope of the issue or problem? Is it local, statewide, regional, national, or global?
4. What is the role of government in the issue or problem? Why should government address this issue? Is some other government agency involved or should they be?

#### B. Understand who is affected and how; identify customers, stakeholders, and expectation groups

1. Who is adversely affected and how?
2. Who benefits and how?
3. How is the organization affected by the issue?

#### C. Determine the seriousness and immediacy of the issue or problem

1. Why is this a serious issue now?
2. How long has this been an issue?
3. How long is it likely to remain an issue?

#### D. Project future trends

1. Is the issue or problem likely to get better or worse? What is likely to happen if nothing is done?
2. What trends influence the issue?

#### E. Determine the underlying causes of the issue

1. What are the perceived causes? What can be documented? Where did the data come from?

2. What key environmental elements influence the issue?
3. Are there any helping or ameliorating forces?

F. Assign a priority relative to other concerns

1. How does this issue compare with other issues?
2. Will solving this problem lead to the solution of other issues or problems?

II. Understand the program designed to address the issue or problem

A. Examine the program logic from the customers's perspective

1. this helps focus on the ultimate outcomes
2. understand key factors in the process that may contribute to the success or failure of the program
3. when looked at from the user's perspective, the description of the program provides clues to some of the critical variables that could make the policy succeed or fail.

B. Look closely at the major pieces of the program. Identify the key aspects of the service system that the policy or program will change in order to help the target population achieve the desired outcome. Will it do so by revising incentives, adding a service, increasing staff, restructuring the sequence of activities, etc?

C. Identify the three or four key components, stages, or logical steps in the process and examine each one separately. Ask yourself, if this part of the process works, what will be the outcome? How do the pieces fit together? Imagine how people flow through a system or what policy makers assume will happen to make a policy work.

D. Identify the intermediate objectives or short-term outcomes for each of these steps or components.

E. Do you know what policy or program actions are critical to the success of meeting these intermediate objectives, as well as meeting the ultimate objective?

F. Identify possible unintended consequences that may result if the action is taken or if the action is not implemented.

III. Examine the program goals and objectives. Determine how much change is wanted. Know where you want to be.

A. Is it clear what changes will occur?



- B. How much change is expected?
- C. How soon is this change expected?

IV. Reach consensus on what is intended and expected (outcomes). Get clarification and agreement from:

- A. Those who established the policy or designed the program and will judge performance (upper management)
- B. Those who are responsible for implementation and will be held accountable (program managers)
- C. Those who will measure performance (line employees)

## DEFINITIONS FOR THE FWP OUTCOME MODEL

1. Agency mission - A mission statement identifies what an organization does (or should do) and for whom it does it. It is the ultimate rationale for the existence of the organization. The mission should be based on the agency's legal mandate. The mission could be considered an agency's **purpose!**

Utility: A mission statement unifies and directs agency activities toward the accomplishment of a common purpose.

2. Vision - The compelling image of the agency's desired future.

Utility: The vision conceptualizes success and excites and inspires the organization to work toward a common ideal.

3. Program - Programs are comprehensive packages of FWP products and services, intended to both conserve and provide for public enjoyment of Montana's fish, wildlife, and parks resources. Successful programs require support from several department work units for both development and implementation.

Utility: Programs communicate agency priorities; expected results and the general approach to achieve those results to people within the agency and to the public.

4. Goal - The general ends toward which effort is directed. Goals are broad statements that describe desired results of an organization or its programs. (Note that for the Federal In Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration grants, Statement of Need - or problem to be solved - is required. This Need Statement is analagous to the Goal, as defined for this Outcomes Model).

Utility: Goals relate to strategic issues and reflect the values and priorities of an organization. Goals stretch and challenge an organization, but they are realistic and achievable. They chart direction - show where the organization is going - but do not set specific milestones or determine ways to get there. Goals describe the "to be" state, that is, they indicate what broad changes will be made over a relatively long period of time.

5. Objective - A specific and measurable target for accomplishment. Objectives represent milestones or intermediate achievements necessary to realize goals. Objectives must be measurable and timebound (i.e. time-frames for meeting objectives should be specified). (Note that Objectives in the Outcome Model are comparable to Objectives that are required for Federal-Aid grants).

Utility: Objectives can be described as stating how much of what is to be achieved in a specific amount of time. Objectives should challenge but should be attainable, and objectives should specify results. Objectives reflect specific accomplishments that are desired, not how to accomplish them. Objectives provide measurable standards to appraise whether the goals are accomplished.

6. Work plan - A detailed description of which strategies will be implemented: i.e. how much of which activities during specified time periods.

Utility: Implementation of work plans is the actual production of an organization. Work plans describe operations, procedures, and processes for specified periods of time. Work plans also provide the framework for monitoring and evaluating the results achieved during the specified period.

7. Strategy - A specific course of action to accomplish the objectives. (Note that Strategies, together with Inputs correspond to the Approach Statement that is required for Federal Aid grants)

Utility: Strategies indicate how objectives will be achieved and determine the amount and type of resources that must be allocated. Strategies provide the strongest linkages between the strategic plan and the operational plans (the work plans) and the strategic plan and the budget.

8. Inputs - Inputs are the resources necessary to conduct a project, program, etc. or provide a service. Inputs include labor, materials, equipment, facilities, and supplies.

Utility: Inputs show the total cost of providing the service, the mix of resources used to provide a service, and the amount of resources used for one service in relation to other services. This information is necessary to allocate budgets.

9. Outputs - Outputs are the quantity of a service or product produced or the number of customers served. Outputs are quantitative. They focus on the level of activity in conducting a particular project, program, etc. (not on the project's results/impacts). (Note that Outputs, together with Outcomes, correspond to the statement of Expected Results and Benefits that is required for Federal Aid grants.)

Utility: Output measurement is valuable for continued policy development and planning, program development, and resource allocation (particularly for calculation and justification of workload adjustments in operating budget requests). However, evaluation of outputs is limited because outputs do not indicate whether program goals and objectives have been accomplished, nor do they indicate anything about the quality or efficiency of the service provided. Outputs are easier than outcomes to measure because the agency has more control over outputs than outcomes and because they usually involve counting the number of products or services produced or the number of customers served

10. Outcomes - End results, or impacts, of a project, program, or initiative on the people who are the intended recipients (customers/general public) of the service provided. Outcomes are the specific effects on people that will result if Fish, Wildlife, and Parks successfully accomplishes its goals. Outcomes may be both intended and unintended. Intended outcomes are the what that is to be achieved by conducting the project, program, etc.

Utility: Outcomes focus on the results accomplished by programs and services. They show



whether program goals and objectives have been met. Outcomes also express the impact of programs on customers and recipients and whether programs solve the issues and problems they were created to address. Outcomes express the societal aspects of natural resource management and are appropriately evaluated through the use of various "human dimensions" techniques.

Outcomes should be expressed in clear statements that specify who will be impacted by the project, program, etc., what the expected impacts are, how much impact is expected, and by when. Outcomes relate to the goals and objectives formulated as part of policy development and strategic planning.

11. Performance measurement - Performance measurement is a means of evaluating policies and programs by measuring inputs, outputs, and outcomes against agreed upon standards. (Note that Performance Measurement is also required for Federal Aid grants, presented as a Performance Report upon completion of Federal Aid projects.)

Utility: Performance measurement gives a performance 'score' or the current performance achieved by the program or service. It cannot definitely say that the program 'caused' the resulting performance, but it explains what level of performance the program is accomplishing. This performance information can be reported to program managers and top management within an agency to be used in decision-making, to evaluate programs, to motivate employees, to make resource allocations, and to improve service delivery. Performance information can be reported to public officials, such as the governor and legislators for policy development and evaluation, for program oversight, and for resource allocation. Finally, performance information can help the public evaluate what they are receiving for their user fees.

12. Efficiency - The cost-effectiveness or productivity resulting from the production of products or services. Efficiency reflects the cost of providing the services or achieving the results. Cost can be expressed in terms of dollars or time per unit of output or outcome. Efficiency can also express the relationship of inputs to outputs or inputs to outcomes.

Utility: Efficiency measurement is important for management and evaluation. It helps organizations improve service delivery.

13. Effectiveness - The degree to which the intended results are achieved. Outcome measures calculate the effectiveness of programs.

Utility: Effectiveness measures whether programs and services have the desired impacts on customers, whether programs solve the problems and issues they were created to address, and whether programs and services result in the intended outcomes.



## Examples for Fish, Wildlife & Parks

### FISH

### WILDLIFE

### PARKS

<b>MISSION:</b>	<i>Stewardship of fisheries</i>	<i>Stewardship of wildlife</i>	<i>Stewardship of Parks</i>
<b>GOAL:</b>	<i>Reduce barriers to public participation in quality fishing as the state's population grows.</i>	<i>Perpetuate healthy elk populations at a level that will sustain public recreational demands without exceeding landowner tolerance for elk numbers.</i>	<i>Increase participation at State Parks.</i>
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	<i>Expand angler access to two watersheds with each region by 1999.</i>	<i>Maintain a 5-week, annual hunting season.</i>	<i>1300 visitors to Bannack in July with 80% satisfaction</i>
<b>STRATEGY:</b>	<i>Develop cooperative partnerships with local government, landowners and angling groups to identify potential sites for acquisition/lease.</i>	<i>Recommend that the USFS implement seasonal closure of the Snattelrake Cr. road - popular access point to an area with low post-season bull:cow ratio</i>  <i>Work with landowners to open at least 8 ranches in HD 983 to free public hunting (cooperative problem-solving approaches, block management, etc.)</i>	<i>Historic preservation training for staff. Stabilize 7 buildings per year. Customer service training for staff. Develop a park marketing plan.</i>
<b>INPUTS:</b>	<i>\$, FTE</i>	<i>\$, FTE</i>	<i>\$, FTE</i>
<b>OUTPUTS:</b>	<i>Measurement of new access opportunity created during planning process (# access sites, miles of stream, # of surface acres, etc).</i>	<i># hunters who found a place to hunt in HD 983 # hunter-days in HD 983 # elk harvested in HD 983</i>	<i>Building stabilization. Park improvements. Increased public awareness of the role of State Parks in historic preservation.</i>
<b>OUTCOMES:</b>	<i>More people experience diverse angling opportunities.</i>	<i>Hunter satisfaction with the hunting experience. Landowner tolerance of elk - (and/or hunters)</i>	<i>More people use and enjoy Montana State Parks</i>

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### PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS:

<b>(Effectiveness)</b>	<i>General increase in participation/satisfaction</i>	<i>% increase in annual elk harvest in HD 983</i>  <i># of game damage complaints in HD 983</i>	<i>General increase in participation/satisfaction</i>
<b>(Efficiency)</b>	<i># of sites cost of development # of persons using</i>	<i># person-hours required to enforce road closure</i>  <i>Block management \$\$ spent per acre of land newly opened to public hunting</i>	<i># of sites cost of development # of persons using</i>

**MISSION:**  
Stewardship of  
Parks

**GOAL:** Increase  
participation at State  
Parks

Effective Measurements  
(Public Participation)

**Outcome:** More  
people use and enjoy  
Montana State Parks.

**Output:** Building  
stabilization. Park  
improvement. Increased  
public awareness of the  
role of State Parks in  
historic preservation.

Efficiency  
Measurement

**OBJECTIVE:** 1300  
visitors to Bannack in July  
with 80% satisfaction.

**WORK PLAN:** Assign staff responsibilities for  
implementing strategy.

**INPUT:** \$, FTE

**Strategy:** Historic preservation training for staff.  
Stabilize 7 building per year. Customer service training  
for staff. Develop a park marketing plan.

## MISSION:

Stewardship of Fisheries

**GOAL:** Increase participation in quality fishing as the state's population grows

Effective Measurements  
(Public Participation)

**Outcome:** More people experience diverse angling opportunities.

## OBJECTIVE:

Expand angler access to two watersheds within each region by 1999.

## Output:

Measurement of new access opportunity created during planning process (# access sites, miles of stream, # of surface acres, etc.).

Efficiency  
Measurement

**WORK PLAN:** Assign staff responsibilities for implementing strategy.

**INPUT:** \$, FTE

**Strategy:** Develop cooperative partnerships with local governments, landowners and angling groups to identify potential sites for acquisition/lease.

## MISSION:

Stewardship of the  
Wildlife Resource

**GOAL:** Perpetuate  
healthy elk pop. at a  
level that will sustain  
public rec. demands  
without exceeding  
landowner tolerance for  
elk numbers.

Effective Measurements  
(Public Participation)

**Outcome:** Hunter  
satisfaction with the  
hunting experience.  
Landowner tolerance of  
elk- (and/or hunters)

**Output:** # of hunters  
who sound a place to  
hunt in HD 983. # of  
hunter-days in HD 983.  
# elk harvested in HD  
983

Efficiency  
Measurement

**OBJECTIVE:** Maintain  
a 5-week, annual hunting  
season

**WORK PLAN:** Assign staff responsibilities  
for implementing strategy.

**INPUT:** \$, FTE

**Strategy:** Recommend that the USFS implement seasonal  
closure of the Snattlerake Cr road- Work with landowners to  
open at least 8 ranches in HD 983 to free public hunting.



**APPENDIX E:**

**Description of Funding Sources**



## **Parks Division Funding Sources** **(Current as of 1995-96 Season)**

\* **General Fund:** May be used for the purpose of conserving the scenic, historic, archaeologic, scientific, and recreational resources of the state, as well as providing for their use and enjoyment.

\* **Private Contracts and Grants:** Revenue sources are private funds received in the form of a donation, grant, or contract (not recorded in A/E 02055 or A/E 02057).

\* **Non-game Wildlife Account (interest bearing):** This revenue is generated by voluntary contributions of income tax refunds by taxpayers, as well as direct donations. The money is used to fund non-game management programs.

\* **Off-Highway Vehicle Fuel Tax:** Revenue source is 1/8 of 1% of the state gasoline dealers' license tax. Ninety percent of the revenue must be used to develop and maintain facilities open to the public at no admission cost. Up to ten percent of the 90 percent may be used to repair areas that are damaged by off-highway vehicles. Ten percent is to be used to promote off-highway vehicle safety.

\* **Off-Highway Vehicle--Parks (interest bearing):** Revenue sources are the \$5 decal fee from owners of off-highway vehicles and the \$5 non-resident off-highway vehicle temporary use permit. Sixty percent of the revenue is for the development and implementation of an off-highway vehicle recreation program. Forty percent of the funding is for the enforcement of the Off-highway Vehicle Registration Act.

\* **Boat Fee in Lieu of Tax (capital):** Revenue source is twenty percent of all boat fees in lieu of taxes collected by the county treasurer. Money is used to improve regional boating facilities under the control of the department. This funding source sunsets on July 1, 2002.

\* **Accommodations Tax:** Revenue source is 6.50% of the total state accommodations tax. Revenue is used for the maintenance of facilities in state parks.

\* **Motorboat Certification--Parks (capital):** Revenue source is the \$2.50 decal fee on motorboats. Twenty percent of the revenue is used for acquisition and maintenance of marine pump-out equipment and other boat facilities. Eighty percent is for the enforcement of motorboat regulation statutes.

**\* Snowmobile Registration--Parks (interest bearing):** Revenue source is the \$5.00 decal fee required for snowmobiles. Fifty percent of the revenue is used for development, maintenance, and operation of snowmobile facilities. The other fifty percent is for the enforcement of snowmobile regulation statutes.

**\* Fishing Access Site (FAS) Maintenance (interest bearing):** Revenue sources are \$1.00 of each resident fishing license, \$1.00 of each non-resident 2-day license, and \$5.00 of each non-resident season fishing license. Fifty percent of the revenue is used for the operation, development, and maintenance of the sites acquired under this law. The other fifty percent is for the acquisition of fishing access sites.

**\* Private Non-Budgeted Funds:** Revenue sources are private funds received in the form of a donation, grant, or contract (not recorded in A/E 02262).

**\* Snowmobile Fuel Tax--Parks:** Revenue source is 15/28 of 1% of the state gasoline dealers' license tax. Eighty six percent of the revenue is used for the development and maintenance of snowmobile facilities. The Enforcement and Conservation Education Divisions of FWP also receive a portion of this money.

**\* Coal Tax Trust Earnings (interest bearing):** Revenue source is the interest earned from the Coal Tax Trust Account. Used to support the development, operation, and maintenance of the state park system.

**\* General License Account (interest bearing):** Revenue sources include the sale of fishing and hunting licenses (unless otherwise earmarked), miscellaneous permit sales, confiscated game sales, Montana Outdoor subscription sales, FAS camping fees, and other assorted revenue sources. Fund is used to support various programs carried out by FWP which benefit sportsmen.

**\* State Parks Earmarked Revenue:** Revenue sources are entry fees and camping fees collected at state parks, cabin site rentals, concessionaire payments, and other miscellaneous revenue. Used to support the general operations of the state park system.

**\* Motorboat Fuel Tax:** Revenue source is 0.9% of the state gasoline dealers' license tax. Used for the creation, improvement, and maintenance of state parks where motorboats are allowed.

**\* PR-DJ Grants:** Funding is from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grants. Used to support various fish and wildlife management related projects. PR funds are provided from manufacturers' Federal Excise Tax on sporting arms and ammunition. DJ monies are from taxes on fishing gear.

**\* State Parks Federal and Private Revenue:** Funding is primarily from the Federal Land



and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) administered by the National Park Service. Used to acquire, develop, and maintain various state parks, recreation areas, and fishing access sites.

**\* Federal Revenue (LCA):** Funding included miscellaneous federal funds used to support various fish and wildlife management-related activities other than PR, DJ, and LWCF.

**\* Outdoor Recreation Clearance:** Funding is Federal LWCF funds which are administered by the department and passed through to local governments.

**\* Grounds Maintenance and Snow Removal:** Revenue source is the inter-departmental reimbursement of grounds maintenance and snow removal costs. Used to account for the costs of providing grounds maintenance and snow removal in the Capitol complex area.



**APPENDIX F:**

**1998-99 State Park Fee Rule**





STATE OF MONTANA

March 6, 1998

DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

BIENNIAL FEE RULE

STATE PARK SYSTEM USER FEES FOR  
THE PERIOD MARCH 1, 1998 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2000

I. LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR RULE

Sections 23-1-105, 23-1-106, and 87-1-303, MCA, authorize the collection of fees and charges for the use of state park system units and fishing access sites, and contain rule-making authority for their use, occupancy and protection. Section 23-1-118 authorizes resident/nonresident fee differentials in primitive parks. Section 23-2-408, MCA, authorizes the collection of recreational and commercial user fees for floating and camping on the Smith River. By virtue of this authority, the department has promulgated the following rule.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. A "camper unit" is defined as a motorized vehicle, motorhome, camping bus, pull-type camper, tent, or any device designed for sleeping, including a combination of any two that are used by parents and their unmarried children.
- B. Camping Cash Cards are one dollar coupons issued in books of 22. They are used in lieu of cash to pay for camping fees in state parks and fishing access sites.
- C. Day use fee is a fee for gaining access to "designated fee areas" of the state park system, either on an annual passport or single visit fee basis.
- D. Primitive parks are those sites listed in 23-1-116, MCA, subject to special restrictions on development and fee collection.
- E. Recreation use fee is a fee for the use of specialized sites, facilities, equipment or services furnished at state expense, and are paid in addition to the day use fee at park units where a day use fee is charged (e.g., a camping fee).
- F. Special fee park is a park normally in an urban setting with heavy usage and increased maintenance and administrative costs.
- G. Special recreation permit fee is a fee for specialized recreation uses such as group activities, recreation events, motorized recreation vehicle activities, and other specialized recreation uses.
- H. Vehicle means any passenger car, motorcycle, mini van, pick-up truck, camper, or boat (where means of access is by water), and does not include commercial vehicles.

### III. DAY USE FEE

A. A "designated fee area" is an area which meets all of the following criteria:

1. The area is a unit of the Montana State Park System administered by the Parks Division of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
2. The area is administered primarily for scenic, historic, archaeologic, scientific, or recreational purposes.
3. The area has recreation facilities or services provided at state expense.
4. The nature of the area is such that day use fee collection is administratively and economically practical.

B. Types of Day Use Fee

1. State Park Passport is an annual pass which must be permanently affixed by the holder to the vehicle's interior left front windshield to be valid. It permits entry to all designated fee areas. It can be purchased at selected license agents, department offices, and designated recreation fee areas. It is valid for one license year and admits one vehicle and the occupants. It is not valid at fishing access sites and wildlife management areas.
2. Single Visit Permit is a non transferable use permit. To be valid, the permit must be completed and displayed by the holder according to the instructions. It permits the entry of one vehicle and the occupants into a park area, or the entry of a single person into a park on foot, by bus, bicycle, or motorcycle. A "single visit" means a more or less continuous stay within a designated area. Payment of a single visit fee shall authorize exits from and re-entries to all nearby designated fee areas. The single visit fee permit is valid only for date of issue unless issued in conjunction with an overnight camping fee. If issued with an overnight camping fee, it is valid for a 24-hour period from the time issued.
3. Non-Fee Permits may be established by the park manager. These permits can be issued to individuals using the park for non-recreational purposes. Qualifying individuals include, but are not limited to, concession and park employees.

### IV. RECREATION USE FEE

A. A recreation use fee shall be charged if at least one of the following criteria is satisfied:

1. A substantial state investment has been made in the facility.
2. The facility requires regular maintenance.
3. The facility or service requires the presence of on-site personnel.
4. The facility is utilized for the personal benefit of the user for a fixed period of time; and

B. All of the following criteria are satisfied.

1. The facility is developed, administered, or provided by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
2. The facility is provided at state expense.
3. The nature of the facility is such that fee collection is administratively and economically practical.

#### C. Types of Recreation Use Fee

1. Overnight Camping Fee is charged per "camper unit" for a specific campsite or temporary area designated by the regional park manager. Unless posted otherwise, no more than two camper units may occupy one campsite. Each camper unit must pay an overnight camping fee. Regional Park Managers may restrict the number of occupants per campsite by posting the limits.
2. Other facilities and services which are eligible for a recreation use fee include but not limited to:
  - Guided tours
  - Campfire wood
  - Specialized sites (rifle ranges)
  - Overnight shelters
  - Swimming areas with lifeguards
  - Boat rental
  - Boat mooring & storage facilities
  - Reservation services
  - Boat launching facilities & services
  - Trailer dump stations
  - Electrical hook-ups
  - Extra Vehicle in campsite
  - Vehicle & trailer storage facilities
  - Recreational floating
  - Showers
  - State provided structures (i.e. yurts, tepees)

#### V. SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT FEE

##### A. Before issuing a special recreation permit, the following conditions must be satisfied:

1. The use complies with pertinent state and federal laws and regulations on public health, safety, air quality, and water quality.
2. The use will not adversely impact archeological, historic, or natural values and is not in conflict with existing classification policy guidelines and specific park management objectives.
3. The necessary clean-up and restoration will be made for any damage to resources or facilities.

4. The use will be restricted, to the extent practical, to an area where minimal impact is imposed on the natural, cultural or recreational resource values.

#### B. Types of Special Recreation Permit Fees

1. Group Use Fee - The following rules apply to areas used by organized groups and apply to state parks and fishing access sites.
  - a. Telephone reservations may be made to the appropriate regional headquarters or park office. All telephone reservations must be confirmed within 48 hours by the completion and filing of a special recreation permit and the payment of cash or 2 checks (one for use fee; one for cleaning/security deposit) by a representative of the interested group in the appropriate regional office.
  - b. Department representatives shall have sole authority and discretion to determine if violation of rules and regulations or undue expense in cleanup or maintenance of the area shall be grounds for denying return of the cleaning/security deposit and/or denying another reservation to any group. The Department may post more specific or rigorous rules for the use of each group use area as group size and/or complexity of use dictates.
  - c. A non-refundable use fee and a refundable cleaning deposit will be assessed for each area for each 24-hour period or fraction thereof.
  - d. In the event a reservation is canceled more than 3 days before the intended use period, the use fee and cleaning/security deposit will be refunded. If a reservation is canceled less than 3 days before the intended use period, only the cleaning deposit will be refunded. If area is unavailable for the intended use (due to unscheduled maintenance, bad weather, etc.), fee and deposit will be refunded.
2. Other uses which may be eligible for special a recreation permit fee include:
  - group activities
  - fishing derbies
  - boating regattas
  - athletic events
  - fireworks
  - motorized vehicle activities
  - group camping

#### VI. FEE EXEMPTIONS

##### A. A recreation fee may be discounted or exempted in the following instances:

1. Park managers may discount or exempt a recreation fees for organized tours or outings conducted for educational or scientific purposes and for those actively engaged in medical treatment or therapy in the area visited.
2. In addition, a park manager may, when in the public interest, prescribe certain hours or days during which the collection of a recreation fee should be discounted or exempted for specific events, when services are reduced, or in case of hardship.
3. In both instances, a cleaning/security deposit may be required.



B. In addition to the above, no day use shall be charged in the following instances:

1. Educational Groups - Organized tours or outings conducted for educational or scientific purposes qualify for an exemption of a day use fee if:
  - a. The educational or scientific purpose is related to the resources of the area being visited.
  - b. The group is from a bona fide institution established for these purposes, including home schools.
  - c. The group applies for and receives an exemption of fees by submitting documentation of their official recognition as an educational or scientific institution and a statement as to the purpose of their proposed visit.
  - d. The use for which the exemption is proposed is not primarily for recreational purposes.
2. Park Thoroughfares - No day use fee shall be charged for travel over any road or highway established as part of the National Federal-Aid System, which is commonly used by the public as a means of travel between two places, either or both of which are outside the designated day use fee area.
3. In-Holding Access - No day use fee shall be charged for travel by private non-commercial vehicle over any road or highway to any land within any designated day use fee area in which such person has a property right.
4. Official Government Business - No day use fee shall be charged any person conducting state, local, or federal government business.
5. Under Twelve - No day use fee shall be charged for persons under 12 years of age except in Special Fee Parks.
6. Treaty Rights - No day use fee shall be charged persons having right of access to lands or waters within a designated day use fee area for hunting or fishing privileges under a specific provision of law or treaty.
7. Toilet Breaks - No day use fee shall be charged persons whose sole purpose when they stop in a state park is to use a toilet.

C. State law (Section 23-1-105(2), MCA) provides that an overnight camping fee must be discounted 50% for a campsite rented by a Montana resident who is a:

1. Senior citizen 62 years of age or older. Photo identification (e.g. Montana Driver's License) or a birth certificate must be displayed as proof of age.
2. Disabled Person - who has been medically determined to be blind or permanently disabled. Verification of disability can be either a disability form obtained from FWP and signed by a physician, or a Resident Disability Conservation License. Either of these items must be presented as proof of disability.

## VII. PENALTY

No person shall enter or use park areas, campgrounds, or other facilities, or otherwise participate in programs or activities for which a fee has been established without first paying the required fee. Any violation of this provision is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500 (Section 23-1-106, MCA). Also refer to 12.8.213(1) ARM.

## VIII. POSTING OF DESIGNATED AREAS

Fee requirements shall be prominently signed and posted where a recreation fee is being charged for day use fee areas or at appropriate locations with designated recreation use facilities. Areas charging for special recreation permits shall post fee information at the area headquarters having administrative jurisdiction over the area in which the use authorized by the permit is to occur. Whenever feasible, fee signs shall be posted at the use site at the time of use.

## IX. FEE LIST

The passport admits one vehicle and occupants into any state park fee area. Passports are not needed for access to fishing access sites and wildlife management areas. State Park Passport: Valid for one license year (March 1st to last day in February); \$20 per vehicle for residents, \$10 for each additional vehicle, if all passports are purchased at the same time; and \$24 per vehicle for non-residents, \$12 for each additional vehicle, if all purchased at the same time. If purchased from December 1st through February 15th, price is \$16 for residents and non-residents; \$8 for each additional vehicle, if all passports are purchased at the same time. Passports purchased during the December 1st - February 15th period are valid immediately upon purchase if permanently affixed to interior lower left windshield.

Duplicate state park passport (for lost or confiscated passports) \$10.00 for residents and \$12.00 for non-residents.

When purchasing more than four passports (1 full price, 3 half price), all vehicle registrations must be presented to the license agent, and all vehicles must be in the same name or registered at the same address.

The per person charge applies to walk-ins, (including access by bicycle, canoe, horse back, or any other means other than by wheeled motor vehicles, commercial bus passengers, and to each rider on a bicycle. The \$4.00 per vehicle charge allows the occupants of a non-commercial vehicle entry into all fee areas. Once paid, single visit rates allow entry into all nearby state parks for the day paid only.

State Park Passports, the per person charge, and the per vehicle charge do not apply to fishing access sites.

FEES ARE COLLECTED DURING THE FOLLOWING SEASONS UNLESS OTHERWISE POSTED  
(VALID PASSPORT HOLDER DEDUCT \$4.00 FROM STATE PARK CAMPING FEE):

SITE	SEASON	DAY USE		CAMPING (see p 10 for off-season rates)
		Vehicle	Person	
Bannack	All Year	\$4	\$1.00	\$11
Beavertail Hill	5/1-9/30	\$4	\$1.00	\$12
Chief Plenty Coups Ages 6 and above <small>+( \$4.00/vehicle or \$1.00/person, whichever is less)</small>	5/1-9/30	\$4+	\$1.00+	---
Cooney	All Year	\$4	\$1.00	\$12
Flathead Lake				
Big Arm	Day Use All Year Camping 5/1-9/30	\$4	\$1.00	\$12
Finley Point	5/1-9/30	\$4	\$1.00	\$12
Wayfarers	Day Use All Year Camping 5/1-9/30	\$4	\$1.00	\$12
West Shore	Day Use All Year Camping 5/1-9/30	\$4	\$1.00	\$11
Yellow Bay	All Year	\$4	\$1.00	\$11
Boat mooring - buoy .....	\$4			
Boat/slip .....	\$5			
Utilities .....	\$3			
Frenchtown Pond Special Fee Park Ages 6 and above <small>* (maximum of \$4 per vehicle with 4 or more immediate family members)</small>	5/1-9/30		\$1.00*	---
Giant Springs Special Fee Park Age 6 and above <small>*(maximum of \$4 per vehicle with 4 or more immediate family members)</small>	All Year		\$1.00*	---
Greycliff Prairie Dog Town Ages 6 and above <small>+ (\$4/vehicle or \$1.00 person whichever is less)</small>	5/1-9/30	\$4+	\$1.00+	---
Hauser Lake (Black Sandy)	All Year	\$4	\$1.00	\$12





SITE	SEASON	DAY USE		CAMPING (see p 10 for off-season rates)
		Vehicle	Person	
Spring Meadow Lake Special Fee Park Age 6 and above  *(maximum of \$4 per vehicle with 4 or more immediate family members)	All Year		\$1.00*	---
Thompson Falls Montana Residents *(no camping discount for passport holders) Non-residents	5/1-9/30	no fee \$4	no fee \$1.00	\$7* \$11
Tongue River *(during construction, once construction is completed - \$12)	All Year	\$4	\$1.00	\$7*
Ulm Pishkun State Park	4/15 - 10/15	\$4	\$1.00	---
Whitefish Lake	Day use 1/1 - 3/1 & 5/1 - 9/30 Camping 5/1 - 9/30	\$4	\$1.00	\$12

<b>FISHING ACCESS CAMPGROUNDS</b> (No camping discount for passport holders)				
Ashley Lake	All Year	na	na	\$5
Big Horn	"	na	na	\$5
Clearwater Crossing	"	na	na	\$5
Corrick's Riverbend	"	na	na	\$5
Craig	"	na	na	\$5
East Rosebud	"	na	na	\$5
Ennis	"	na	na	\$5
Forest Grove	"	na	na	\$5
Grey Bear	"	na	na	\$5
Greycliff	"	na	na	\$5
Harrison Lake	"	na	na	\$5
Harpers Lake	"	na	na	\$5
Intake	"	na	na	\$5
Johnsrud	"	na	na	\$5
Loch Leven	"	na	na	\$5
Looking Glass	5/1 - 11/30	na	na	\$5

SITE	SEASON	DAY USE		CAMPING (see p. 10 for off-season rates)
		Vehicle	Person	
Mallard's Rest	All Year	na	na	\$5
Nine Mile Prairie	"	na	na	\$5
Pelican Point	"	na	na	\$5
Prewett Creek	"	na	na	\$5
Rosebud West	"	na	na	\$5
Russell Gates	"	na	na	\$5
Sheep Mountain	"	na	na	\$5
Spite Hill	"	na	na	\$5
Springdale Bridge	"	na	na	\$5
Stickney Creek	"	na	na	\$5
Thibodeau	"	na	na	\$5
Valley Garden	"	na	na	\$5
Varney Bridge	"	na	na	\$5
Wolf Creek Bridge	"	na	na	\$5
York Bridge	"	na	na	\$5

NOTE: DAY USE FEES DO NOT APPLY TO FISHING ACCESS SITES

### OFF SEASON CAMPING

(Oct. 1 through April 30)

State Parks ..... \$2 off the on-season rate  
No off season rates for fishing access sites

NOTE: The above listed overnight camping fees include 4% accommodation tax for tourism promotion and park maintenance as per Section 15-65-101, MCA, and applicable state park day use fee for vehicles without state park passports. Day use fees are not collected at fishing access sites and wildlife management areas.

**CAMPING CASH CARDS:** Are sold only at the Helena headquarters and all regional offices of the department from December 1 through September 30 for the price of \$20 per book. Camping Cash Cards are non-refundable, and will not be replaced if lost or stolen. Camping Cash Cards have no expiration date.

GROUP DAY USE FEES (paid in lieu of day use fee):

<u>Group size</u>	<u>Minimum fee per day</u>	<u>Cleaning/security deposit</u>
Under 30	\$ 60	\$ 50
30 - 50	\$ 85	\$ 75
51 - 100	\$ 115	\$ 100
101 - 200	\$ 225	\$ 200

Groups of over 200: Pay \$225 use fee plus \$100 for each additional unit of up to 100 people.  
Cleaning deposit is \$225 plus \$100 for each additional unit of up to 100 people.

GROUP CAMPING FEES are determined by the number of camping units and the fees in force at the park.

OTHER SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT FEE: To be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Other Charges

Surcharge assessed to persons who do not display a valid permit at areas with self-service fee stations (for all areas except Smith River), (if paid before leaving park) ..... \$5  
(if paid after leaving park). .... \$10

Special event guided tours (other than Lewis and Clark Caverns Cave Tours) .... \$2.00 to \$5.00

Camping in state provided structures (yurts/tepees) ..... \$25 to \$39/night

Surcharge for Smith River (only) ..... \$10/person

Charge for checks returned because of insufficient funds ..... \$10

Campfire wood--per bundle ..... minimum \$ 3

Group Use Campsite Reservation fee ..... \$ 5

Showers ..... 25¢

Special event fees ranging from \$1.00 to \$5.00 per person or \$4.00 to \$5.00 per vehicle or some combination of the two may be charged. A discount will be provided for passport holders.

Canoe, hourly ..... \$ 3

half-day ..... \$ 8

full-day ..... \$16

## XI. GIANT SPRINGS

The Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission delegates to the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks the authority to work in cooperation with the United State Forest Service to establish a joint fee structure for visitors to both Giant Springs State Park and the USFS Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. Upon successful negotiation, the commission delegates to FWP the authority to directly amend this fee rule accordingly.

## XII. SMITH RIVER

- 1) RIVER CAPACITY - The maximum number of private/outfitter launches shall not exceed nine launches per day.
- 2) REGISTRATION
  - a) There is mandatory registration for outfitters and private floaters. A pre-registration fee of \$175 per outfitter launch, \$15 per Montana resident private floater launch, and \$35 per non-resident Montana private floater launch must accompany the application. Only one application per person may be submitted. This fee will be applied towards launch fee. Permits are issued to an individual and are non-transferable. Initial private floater launch dates will be allocated by drawing. Unsuccessful applicants for the initial drawing may donate their pre-registration fee to the Corridor Enhancement Account or receive a refund.
  - b) During the peak floating period of June 10 through July 10, a total of (5) private and/or outfitter launches per week which are voluntarily canceled by the permit holders will not be refilled or reallocated to subsequent private parties. Canceled launch dates will be reallocated to private floater beginning with the sixth floater cancellation during a given week during the peak floating. The reallocation of launches starting with the sixth private cancellation during a given week will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
  - c) On dates other than June 10 through July 10, and following the fifth voluntary cancellation per week between June 10 and July 10 as described above, any unassigned private launches will be available daily to private floaters on a first come, first served basis. Self registration is required when river rangers are not available at Camp Baker. Unassigned outfitter launches will be available to private floaters seven days before the launch date.
  - d) Persons failing to notify either the Great Falls office or Camp Baker station in the event of a cancellation will be ineligible for the drawing in the following season. In case of a cancellation, pre-registration fees paid can only be applied by the individual permit holder to the remainder of the current float season, after which it is placed in the Smith River operations account. Cancellations made two days or less before the launch date results in the loss of the pre-registration fee.



e) During the peak floating season of June 10 through July 10 both outfitted and private parties shall be limited to a four (4) night stay limit in the Smith River corridor.

f) There is a \$5.00 drawing fee for private floater application (non-refundable)

### 3) CAMPSITE DECLARATION

All floaters are required to declare their campsites on the boat camp declaration board.

### 4) BOAT IDENTIFICATION

Waterproof tags will be issued to each group when the fee is paid. Each group must display a tag while on the river.

### 5) GROUP SIZE

Maximum group size is 15 people (including guides and other outfitter staff). A bona fide group has shared planning and expenses for the trip, generally remains together while traveling to and on the river, and has a distinct and identifiable kitchen and camping unit within the same declared campsite.

### 6) EDUCATIONAL GROUPS

Organized tours or outings conducted for educational or scientific purposes may, on a case-by-case basis, qualify for an exemption of group size limit and fee if:

- a) The group is not outfitted.
- b) The educational or scientific purpose is related to the resources of the Smith River.
- c) The group pre-registers at least 30 days in advance.
- d) The group is from a bona fide institution established for these purposes.
- e) The group applies for and receives an exemption by submitting documentation of their official recognition as an educational or scientific institution and a statement as to the purpose of their proposed visit.
- f) The use for which the exemption is proposed is not primarily for recreational purposes.

### 7) FEES

#### a) Recreational User Fee

The recreational user fee for residents of Montana as defined in §87-2-1-2, MCA, is \$15 per person per trip for floaters age 12 and older. Non-resident fees are \$35 per person per trip for floaters age 12 and older. There is no fee for children age 11 and under. Full fee paid May 1 - September 30. The fee is half price in April and October. No fee from November to March.

b) Outfitter Fee

\$15 for each outfitter and outfitter staff; \$70 for each outfitted client; plus \$175 fee per outfitted launch.

c) Bona fide landowners and immediate family usage:

- \* Pay appropriate recreational user fee only if floating overnight. Landowners who do not float overnight do not count against the daily private launch allocation.
- \* Must register for overnight and day floats either by telephone, mail, or in person. A bona fide landowner is a person who owns land bordering the Smith River anywhere between Camp Baker and Eden Bridge as shown by Meagher and Cascade County records.
- \* Immediate family includes parents, siblings and children of landowner.

d) Bona fide landowners and non-immediate family usage:

1. day floats only;
2. no commercial use;
3. landowners will be required to register and display boat tags;
4. one such landowner waiver per day for the entire river, allocated on a first-come, first-served basis;
5. limited to a total of 6 people per trip;
6. trips will be of one-day duration only, consecutive day floats are not allowed;
7. each non-family member will be required to pay a \$7.50 floater fee;

8) CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT ACCOUNT

Fifty dollars from outfitted client fee, and 10% of all other fees collected will be put in a Smith River Enhancement Account to be used to better manage and protect the river corridor.

9) OUTFITTERS

a) Outfitter Allocation

- \* Outfitter launches are capped at 73/year, with no more than 54 launches/year allowed during each peak season. There are 14 authorized outfitters for the Smith River.
- \* Awarding of actual launch dates will be done in conjunction with the authorized outfitters.
- \* Authorized outfitters are limited to 1 launch per day, with an additional 2 launches allowed per week during the peak season on days of lowest private floater use as determined by the Department.

b) Outfitter Permits

- \* Authorized outfitters will receive annual concessionaire permits. The Department has the option of withdrawing or retiring a permit held by an outfitter who violates federal or state laws or rules or Department regulations.
- \* Authorized outfitters must be licensed in the State of Montana and permitted by the King's Hill Ranger District of the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

c) Permit Transfer

- \* If the concessionaire through failure to license with the Board of Outfitters, voluntary sale or transfer of the outfitting business ceases to operate the business for which a permit is intended, the permit shall be subject to cancellation. If the permittee sells or transfers the outfitting business to another individual the department may transfer the permit and its associated launches to the new owner of the outfitting business, providing that the new concession applicant can meet criteria established by the Department and is willing and able to provide at least an equivalent floating service to the public as was previously offered by the original concessionaire. This paragraph also applies to sale or transfer of individual launches. Further providing, the Department receives a transfer fee of \$100.00 per launch for each launch permanently transferred.
- \* Permanent permit transfers will only be approved if they include all allocated launches. Individual launch transfers (both temporary and permanent) are permitted only within the group of authorized outfitters. Temporary transfers may be as few as one launch.

d) Outfitter Fee Credit

- \* The equivalent amount of an outfitter fee owed and paid to the U.S. Forest Service for each season will be credited to the outfitter should the Forest Service not terminate their fee collection system on the Smith River. All balances will be cleared by the department by December 31st of each year and refunds issued if appropriate.

SMITH RIVER  
AUTHORIZED OUTFITTERS FOR 1997-1999

NAME	BUSINESS NAME	ALLOCATED LAUNCHES		
		Peak and/or shoulder season	Shoulder seasons	Total
1 CAIN, RANDY	MONTANA OUTDOORS ADV.	1		1
2 D'AMBRUOSO, ROBERT	HEADWATERS ANGLING	9		9
3 DEACON, GRAHAM	GRAHAM DEACON OUT.	1		1
4 GEARY, MIKE	LEWIS & CLARK EXPEDITIONS	7	1	8
5 JONES, MARK	RIVER RESOURCE OUTFITTERS	3		3
6 HILLYGUS, MIKE	HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER	3		3
7 MADSEN, CRAIG	MONTANA RIVER OUT.	14	1	15
8 MAKI, JOHN	JOHN MAKI OUTFITTING	4	1	5
9 PERRY, JOHN	JOHN PERRY FLYFISHING	1		1
10 RENAUD, ED	BIG SKY EXPEDITIONS	6	1	7
11 ROOS, PAUL	PAUL ROOS OUTFITTING	11		11
12 TEDESCO, FRED	WESTERN RIVERS	4		4
13 WALKER, ROBERT	SMITH RIVER FLY FISHING EXPEDITIONS	4		4
14 PADGHAM, GARY	MONTANA RIVER WORKS	1		1
TOTALS		69	4	73

XII. FLATHEAD LAKE STATE PARK: WILD HORSE ISLAND

Maximum group size is 15 persons without a permit and maximum of 30 with a permit. A bona fide group has shared planning and transportation to the island and generally remains together.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STAN MEYER, Chairman      DATE  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
PATRICK J. GRAHAM      DATE  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission



**APPENDIX G:**

**Generalized List of Special Events**



# **STATE PARK CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

What follows is a representative listing of the annual events and activities that typically occur in Montana's State Parks. The specific list varies from year to year.

## **JANUARY/FEBRUARY**

- \* Most parks are open for ice fishing, ice skating, wildlife viewing, hiking, cross-country skiing, winter camping, photography, and other winter outdoor activities. Reduced camping rates are in effect. Rental cabins are available at Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park.
- \* Educational, informative tours for students are available at several state parks throughout the entire school year. Contact your local FWP office for details.
- \* "Early Bird" State Park Passport Decals on sale. The passport allows vehicle occupants free entrance to any Montana State Park.
- \* The warming house at Bannack State Park is open on weekends for skating and other winter recreation. Call for more details (406-834-3413).

## **MARCH**

- \* New license year begins. Don't forget to renew your fishing license and State Park Passport.
- \* Bannack ice skating and warming house close for the season.

## **APRIL**

- \* Public tours begin at Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park--call for details.
- \* Lone Pine State Park Visitor Center opens for the season.
- \* Smith River floater fees available at half price.
- \* Winners announced for annual State Park Poster Contest.

## **MAY**

- \* Buzzard Day at Makoshika State Park, a fun event for the whole family.
- \* Motorboat testing at Lake Elmo State Park.
- \* Flathead Lake State Park units open for camping.
- \* Regular season floater fees in effect on Smith River.
- \* Bannack State Park Visitor Center opens.
- \* Kite Fest at Frenchtown Pond State Park--a fun event for the whole family.
- \* "Discovery Days" at Lone Pine State Park begin in May, with monthly day camps for children, as well as outings for seniors and special new programs.
- \* Saturday night lecture series begins at Bannack State Park. Call (406) 843-3413 for a list of lecture topics. Also, tours of the Bannack townsite and mill are available throughout the summer.

## **JUNE**

- \* Reenactment of the Lewis and Clark encampment at Giant Spring State Park. Living interpretation of portage around the Great Falls of the Missouri River. A variety of historical activities for people of all ages.
- \* "Saturday Evening Campfire Talks" begin at Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park for the summer. Contact the Caverns for more details.
- \* "Thursday Evening Campfire Presentations" begin at the Makoshika State Park Campground for the summer. Contact park for more details.
- \* "Nature Movies" series begins at Lone Pine State Park Visitors Center. The series includes outstanding Fish, Wildlife & Parks presentations, as well as informative films from other sources.
- \* "Out to Lunch" series begins at Fort Owen State Park. Bring a bag lunch and enjoy a program on Montana history in the beautiful Bitterroot Valley.

## **JULY**



\* Spring Meadow Lake State Park Triathlon (biking, running, and swimming). Call (406) 444-4720 for more details.

\* Bannack Days at Bannack State Park. History comes alive in this celebration of the Montana frontier. Hearty meals are served at the Meade Hotel, and an old-time church service is offered on Sunday morning.

\* Lake Elmo State Park hosts the annual Beach Games Day.

\* Annual walleye tournament at Hell Creek State Park. Call FWP Glasgow (406-228-9347) or Miles City (406-232-4365) offices for more details.

\* Fourth of July fireworks can be viewed from the Wayfarers Unit on Flathead State Park.

\* Special days for kids and seniors at Spring Meadow State Park.

\* "Tour of the Night Skies" astronomy program occurs at Frenchtown Pond State Park.

\* Kids' and Seniors' Days at Spring Meadow State Park.

\* Fort Owen Day at Fort Owen State Park. Ceremony to commemorate Montana's first permanent white settlement in 1841.

## **AUGUST**

\* Garden City Triathlon at Frenchtown Pond State Park. For further information, call (406) 542-5500.

\* Dinner Theater in the Park, at Makoshika State Park. Enjoy dinner and a play in a beautiful natural setting.

\* Hell Creek State Park is the site of the annual "Women's Walleye Tournament," the "Montana Bass Federation Qualifier," and the "Youth Fishing Tournament. Contact the FWP Miles City office for more details about these August events (406-232-4365).

## **SEPTEMBER**

\* Native American Awareness Week at Chief Plenty Coups State Park. Activities focus on Native American culture, history, and dress.

\* On Bannack "Senior Citizen Day," seniors (and anyone else who wishes), are allowed to

drive through Bannack. This is a special opportunity for people with limited mobility to see the heart of the old ghost town. Call the park for more details.

- \* Educational programs available at Lone Pine. Call the park for more details.

- \* Chief Plenty Coups Day at Chief Plenty Coups State Park. The day-long festivities include a traditional Crow meal, cultural activities, and information about Chief Plenty Coups and Crow culture.

## **OCTOBER**

- \* Off season camping fees in effect. Also, reduced floating fees on Smith River.

- \* The ghosts of Bannack's wild past come alive during Bannack "Ghost Town Tours."

- \* Guided tours of Lewis and Clark Caverns end for the year.

## **NOVEMBER**

- \* Most parks remain open for camping, hiking, wildlife viewing, and assorted winter activities. Reduced fees in effect.

- \* "Early Bird" Park passports become available at the end of November.

## **DECEMBER**

- \* Holiday candlelight tours of Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park.

## **APPENDIX H:**

### **List of Accessible Sites**





# BARRIER FREE RECREATION ON FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS LANDS

*State Parks  
Fishing Access Sites  
Wildlife Management Areas*

**June 1997**

Montana is renowned for its abundant natural resources and unmatched scenic beauty. Here, under the Big Sky, recreational opportunities seem endless for those who are not disabled. To some, physical challenges increase the enjoyment of particular recreational pursuits and enhance the outdoor experience. But to people with disabilities, such situations can act as barriers and deprive individuals of the chance to enjoy the same recreational opportunities that make the quality of life in Montana so appealing.

We at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks recognize that ALL Montanans and visitors to our state have a right to recreational opportunities and access to state parks, fishing access sites, wildlife management areas and other department facilities and programs. Listed in this brochure are FWP-owned or administered sites that are accessible recreational sites for those with disabilities. The campsites listed are accessible--meaning they are flat, have accessible parking and picnic pad and grill areas and are in proximity to accessible restroom facilities and accessible sources of drinking water. Some also offer accessible trails to major attractions, such as streams, rivers and other bodies of water for fishing and boating.

Those desiring an accessible campsite are advised to arrive at the site early because state park campsites are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. A 50-percent discount on state park camping fees is available to Montana residents who hold a valid "Resident Person with Disability Conservation License." For information on obtaining this license, contact your nearest Fish, Wildlife & Parks office.

Although total accessibility is often impossible to achieve in outdoor settings, especially in Montana's often rugged terrain, it is FWP's intention to make a variety of sites as accessible as possible to the greatest number of people, given the limitations of natural and physical features. Some trails and surfaces are asphalt, gravel or hard-packed soil, while others are grassy. Many provide easy access to flush toilets, while others are 100 feet or more from pit toilets. Site terrain also varies greatly. For the purposes of this brochure, the term "challenging" is used to convey trails exceeding an 8.3-percent grade and/or surfacing other than asphalt; concrete or hard-packed gravel.



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

We have undertaken a concerted, long-term effort to make as many of our facilities, sites and programs as accessible as possible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Some important improvements have been made to date and we intend to begin work on others as soon as we are able. Funding for these improvements comes from a variety of sources, including state park user fees (for improvements at state parks), hunting and fishing license fees, and federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment.

The information in this brochure will be updated periodically to include the latest accessibility improvements at our sites and facilities. Your thoughts and suggestions regarding this brochure or about your personal recreational interests are welcome and will enhance our efforts. Please send your comments to the Parks Division, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 E. Sixth Ave, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701.

Answers to questions about accessibility of sites in the individual FWP administrative regions/areas can be obtained by calling the following telephone numbers:

Region 1, Kalispell	(406) 752-5501
Region 2, Missoula	(406) 542-5500
Region 3, Bozeman	(406) 994-4042
Region 4, Great Falls	(406) 454-5840
Region 5, Billings	(406) 247-2940
Region 6, Glasgow	(406) 228-3700
Region 7, Miles City	(406) 232-0900
Butte Area Office	(406) 494-1953
Havre Area Office	(406) 265-6177
Helena Area Office	(406) 449-8864
Helena Headquarters	(406) 444-2535

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD): (406) 444-1200

Thank you for your interest in our programs and services.

*Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks receives federal funds and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, or handicap. For information or concerns regarding discrimination, contact the Personnel Officer, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701, 406-444-1371, or The Montana Human Rights Commission, 1236 Sixth Ave., Helena, MT 59620; 1-800-542-0807.*

# ***STATE PARKS***

## **Region 1 - Kalispell**

### *Lone Pine State Park* - Kalispell

Offers an accessible visitor center and a trail to a scenic overlook that provides views of Flathead Lake to the Big Mountain Ski Area. Accessible restrooms. **Location:** 4 miles southwest of Kalispell on Foy's Lake Road, then 1 mile north on Lone Pine Road.

### *Flathead Lake State Park* - south of Kalispell

#### *Big Arm* - Big Arm Bay on Flathead Lake's western shore

Accessible restroom with showers, accessible boat launch area. Playground. **Location:** 12 miles north of Polson on U.S. 93.

#### *Finley Point* - north of Polson on the east shore of Flathead Lake

Offers several accessible picnic and camping spots, as well as an accessible boat and fishing dock in a secluded timbered setting. Accessible vault toilets. **Location:** 11 miles north of Polson on Montana 35, then 4 miles west on county road.

#### *Wayfarers* - near Bigfork on the northeast shore of Flathead Lake

Accessible boat dock, boat pump out, vault toilet (Spring 1998 - accessible restrooms). **Location:** ½ mile south of Bigfork on Montana 35.

### *Lake Mary Ronan State Park* - southwest of Kalispell

Accessible boat dock. **Location:** From U.S. 93 on the west shore of Flathead Lake, turn west at Dayton onto Lake Mary Ronan Highway, travel west approximately 6 miles to the lake, then follow local signs to the state park.

## **Region 2 - Missoula**

### *Beavertail Hill* - I-90, east of Missoula.

This 65-acre site located on the Clark Fork River offers accessible picnicking, trail, 1 accessible camping spot and an accessible latrine. **Location:** 26 miles east of Missoula on I-90 to Beavertail Hill exit 130, then 0.25 miles south on the county road.



Salmon Lake State Park - south of Seeley Lake

On one of the beautiful links in the chain of lakes fed by the Clearwater River, this park offers 1 accessible camping spot and a trail to the amphitheater. Boat dock. Accessible restrooms. **Location:** 5 miles south of Seeley Lake on Montana 83.

Placid Lake State Park - southwest of Seeley Lake

On a branch of the Clearwater River, this park provides 2 accessible camping spots, trails and an accessible boat dock. Accessible restrooms. **Location:** 3 miles south of Seeley lake on Montana 83, then 3 miles west on county road.

Lost Creek State Park - Anaconda

Lost Creek falls can be observed from a challenging accessible trail and 1 accessible camping spot is available. Accessible latrine. **Location:** 1.5 miles east of Anaconda on Montana 1, then 2 miles north on Secondary 273, then 6 miles west.

Council Grove State Park - west of Missoula

This natural site offers abundant Montana history and provides a challenging experience for people with disabilities. Accessible latrine. **Location:** West of Missoula on I-90 take Reserve St. exit, then 2 miles south on Reserve St., then 10 miles west on Mullan Road.

### **Region 3 - Bozeman**

Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park - east of Whitehall

The Paradise Room, one of the most spectacular sites in these limestone caves, can be accessed by people with disabilities upon request from May through September. Advance notice is requested during the months of June through August. There are 3 accessible camping cabins, 1 accessible campsite and an accessible shower facility at the lower campground. Accessible restrooms and a park concession are located adjacent to the park visitor center and caverns parking area. **Location:** 19 miles west of Three Forks on Montana 2.

Missouri Headwaters State Park - Three Forks

Where the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin rivers converge, 1 accessible camping spot, some challenging trails and accessible restrooms are offered. **Location:** 3 miles east of Three Forks on I-90 take Three Forks exit, then east on Secondary 205, then 3 miles north on Secondary 286.



Bannack State Park - southwest of Dillon

Montana's first territorial capital offers an accessible visitor center and some challenging boardwalks. A wheelchair is available for those wishing to use it. Accessible restrooms. **Location:** 5 miles south of Dillon on I-15, then 21 miles west on Secondary 278, then 4 miles south on county road.

### ***Helena Area Resource Office***

Spring Meadow Lake State Park - Helena

A 30-acre spring fed lake offers accessible picnicking, trails and an accessible fishing dock. Accessible restrooms. **Location:** West edge of Helena off U.S. 12.

Hauser Lake (Black Sandy) State Park - north of Helena on Hauser Reservoir

This park is equipped with two (2) accessible camp sites, restrooms, boat ramp and docks. **Location:** 7 miles north of Helena on I-15, then 4 miles east on Secondary 453 (Lincoln Road), then 3 miles north on county road.

## **Region 4 - Great Falls**

Giant Springs State Park - Great Falls

One of the largest freshwater springs in the nation provides an accessible fishing pier and trails. A visitor area and display pond at the Giant Springs hatchery on the park grounds also are accessible. Accessible restrooms are offered. Accessible overlooks to the falls connected by the Rivers Edge Trail. Accessible playground. **Location:** 3 miles east of U.S. 87 on River Drive.

## **Region 5 - Billings**

Pictograph Caves State Park - Billings

Ancient rock paintings can be found at this park, which provides picnicking on a flat grassy area and a very challenging trail. Accessible restrooms. **Location:** 8 miles east of Billings on I-90 take Lockwood exit, then 6 miles south on county road.

Chief Plenty Coups State Park - Pryor

The Chief's home can be observed by traveling a challenging trail, and the accessible museum provides a broad array of historical and cultural information on the Crow Tribe. Accessible restrooms. **Location:** 1 mile west of Pryor on county road.

Greycliff Prairie Dog Town - east of Big Timber

Black-tailed prairie dogs can be observed from your vehicle. The prairie dog community provides an unusual wildlife viewing experience. Accessible picnic benches are available.

**Location:** 9 miles east of Big Timber on I-90 at Greycliff exit.

Cooney Reservoir - southwest of Billings

This increasingly popular fishing and boating destination in south-central Montana offers accessible restrooms and showers and an accessible boat dock. **Location:** 55 miles southwest of Billings on U.S. 212, then 5 miles west on the county road.

Lake Elmo State Park - Billings

This 64-acre reservoir is provided with accessible restrooms, changing rooms, fishing dock, beach and boat ramp. **Location:** North end of Billings (in the Heights) off Lake Elmo Drive.

## Region 7 - Miles City

Makoshika State Park - Glendive

Numerous fossil remains have been found at this scenic park, which offers an accessible visitor center and accessible restrooms. Montana's largest state park also offers accessible picnicking. Accessible camp sites available at the park. **Location:** Snyder Avenue in Glendive.

# ***FISHING ACCESS SITES***

Accessibility improvements have been completed at several fishing access sites and continue at a number of other FASs across Montana. **The FASs listed below all have accessible parking pads, hardtop trails to accessible restrooms and accessible fishing stations and/or boating and fishing docks, except as noted.** Some sites have accessible vault toilets. Additional completed or planned improvements and estimated project completion dates are as follows:

## **Region 1 - Kalispell**

### *Bigfork* - Bigfork

This site, at the mouth of the Swan River on the southern edge of Bigfork, offers access to fishing opportunities on the north end of Flathead lake. **Location:** South of Bigfork on U.S. 35 to Milepost 31, then 1/4 mile east on county road.

### *Old Steel Bridge* - Kalispell

Close to Kalispell and Columbia Falls on the mainstem of the Flathead River, this site offers good fishing for whitefish in September and October. **Location:** East from Kalispell on U.S. 2 to milepost 123, then south on Shady Lane, then east on Conrad Drive.

### *Smith Lake* - Kila

The destination of many Flathead area anglers for catching numbers of good sized perch in the spring. **Location:** West from Kalispell 7 miles on U.S. 2 to milepost 112, then 1 mile south on county road.

### *Somers* - on Flathead Lake, south of Kalispell

Certainly one of Flathead Lake's most popular boat launching sites, this site provides access for many anglers seeking the lake's renowned lake trout each spring and summer. **Location:** 8 miles south of Kalispell on U.S. 93.

### *Flat Iron Ridge* - Thompson Falls

This site on the picturesque Clark Fork River offers excellent spring and early summer fishing for smallmouth bass. **Location:** 5 miles northwest of Thompson Falls on Montana 200.

### *Woods Bay* - Woods Bay on Flathead Lake

Located in a protected bay, this site is a popular departure point for anglers and boaters on the

east shore of Flathead Lake. **Location:** South of Bigfork on U.S. 35 approximately 14 miles to Milepost 27, then 1 mile west on county road.

Walstad - near Big Arm on Flathead Lake

The Walstad FAS is located in the southwest corner of Flathead Lake, just south of Wild Horse Island. The site provides public boating access to the channels and islands in the southern portion of the lake. **Location:** North of Polson on U.S. 93 approximately 10 miles to Milepost 72, then 1/4 mile northwest on access road.

## Region 2 - Missoula

Woodside Bridge - west of Missoula

This popular FAS on the Bitterroot River offers good summer and fall fishing for rainbow trout, brown trout and mountain whitefish. Accessible latrine and fishing platform with connecting paved pathway. **Location:** 4 miles north of Hamilton on U.S. 93, then 1 mile east on county road.

Harper's Lake - Clearwater Junction

This small lake, just across Montana 83 from the western edge of the Blackfoot-Clearwater Wildlife Management Area (Winter Game Range), holds good numbers of rainbow trout. Fishing is best in summer and fall. Accessible latrine and fishing platform, with cement sidewalk between the two. **Location:** 14 miles south of Seeley Lake on Secondary 209.

Beavertail Pond - east of Missoula

This former gravel pit easily accessed by I-90 is stocked with catching-sized rainbow trout. Accessible latrine and fishing platform (**proposed for completion in 1997**), with connecting sidewalk. **Location:** 26 miles east of Missoula on I-90 to milepost 130 (Beavertail Hill exit), then 1/4 mile east on county road.

## Region 3 - Bozeman

Dailey Lake - Livingston

A favorite spot for Paradise Valley perch anglers in the early spring. **Location:** 1 mile east of Emigrant, then 4 miles south on Secondary 240, then 6 miles southeast on county road.

Three Forks Ponds - Three Forks

Set on one of three ponds on the eastern edge of Three Forks, this FAS offers anglers the



opportunity to catch fish of many species, including some very large rainbow trout. **Location:** East side of the town of Three Forks, south of the middle pond.

Eight Mile Ford - Ennis

Accessible parking, vault toilet, cultural interpretive area. **Note:** Access to river is limited to a gravel road. **Location:** 2 miles south of Ennis on Montana 287, then 1.5 miles south on county (Varney) road.

## ***Helena Area Resource Office***

Causeway - at Lake Helena

Located at the outlet of Lake Helena into the Missouri River just north of Helena, the site is popular throughout the year among anglers seeking rainbow trout, kokanee salmon and perch. **Location:** 7 miles north of Helena on I-15, then 5 miles east on Secondary 453 (Lincoln Road).

## **Region 4 - Great Falls**

Giant Springs - on the Missouri River in Great Falls

Incorporated into Giant Springs State Park and next door to FWP's Giant Springs Hatchery, anglers here enjoy good fishing for rainbow trout year round. **Location:** 3 miles east of U.S. 87 on River Drive.

Big Casino Creek Reservoir - Lewistown

Accessible improvements include a picnic shelter able to accommodate large groups. The site is very popular with Lewistown area anglers of all ages and abilities who hope to hook into some of the reservoir's large rainbow trout. Best fishing is in the summer and fall. **Location:** 1.5 miles south of Lewistown on Castle Butte Road.

## **Region 5 - Billings**

Cliff Swallow - Absarokee

On the Stillwater River, this site provides productive rainbow and brown trout fishing for anglers during the late spring, summer and fall. **Location:** 10 miles west of Absarokee on Secondary 420.

### Captain Clark - Custer

One of the best spots in Montana to hook into a catfish, this site on the wide Yellowstone River offers the best fishing in mid-summer. **Location:** 8 miles west of Custer on frontage road.

### Roger's Pier - Lake Elmo State Park, Billings

Set on the south bank of Montana's most popular urban state park, the pier is named for the late Roger Fliger, long-time FWP regional supervisor in Billings. The lake offers good fishing for bass, perch and panfish all summer long. **Location:** North end of Billings (in the Heights) off Lake Elmo Drive.

## **Region 6 - Glasgow**

### Fresno Tailwater - Havre

A popular destination for anglers from across Montana who hope to set a hook into hard-fighting northern pike and walleye, sauger, rainbow trout and Lake Superior whitefish. Fishing is excellent from spring through the fall. **Location:** 11 miles west of Havre on U.S. 2, then 2 miles north on county road, then northeast on Bureau of Reclamation road to the Milk River.

### Bear Paw Lake - Havre

This site offers some of the finest cutthroat and rainbow trout fishing in north-central Montana. Fishing is best in spring and summer. **Location:** 17 miles south of Havre on Secondary 234.

## **Region 7 - Miles City**

### Twelve Mile Dam - Miles City

Located on the Tongue River just a short drive south out of Miles City, water from the dam downstream to the Tongue's confluence with the Yellowstone River offers good fishing for bass, sauger and catfish from the spring through the fall. In spring and early summer, be sure to bring along plenty of mosquito repellent. **Location:** 11 miles south of Miles City on Montana 59, then 1 mile south on Secondary 332 (Tongue River Road).

# ***WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS***

Wildlife can be viewed from a vehicle at many Wildlife Management Areas during certain times of the year. For further information on WMAs throughout Montana, contact FWP's Wildlife Division in Helena at (406) 444-2612.

## **Region 1 - Kalispell**

### **Ninepipe WMA** - Pablo

This wetlands complex provides a diversity of plant and animal life and, therefore, diverse recreational opportunities. A new access road to the WMA leads to an accessible parking area where accessible restrooms and a wildlife viewing area are located and an accessible interpretive trail begins. **Location:** Turn left off Highway 93 at the Allentown Restaurant south of Ronan and follow the signs to the WMA entrance.

## **Region 4 - Great Falls**

### **Freezout WMA** - Fairfield

This complex of ponds formed by dikes becomes a watchable wildlife paradise in spring and fall as hundreds of thousands of migrating waterfowl stop to rest at the WMA on their travels north to nesting areas and then back south for the winter. But many species of wildlife reside on the area for much of the year. Wildlife is readily viewable from vehicles on those roadways open to travel, as well as from an accessible parking area. Featured for visitors are two accessible restrooms and an accessible picnic bench. **Location:** 4 miles north of Fairfield on U.S. 287.

## ***MISCELLANEOUS OTHER SITES***

### ***Fish, Wildlife & Parks Headquarters Visitor Centers***

Region 1 - Kalispell; Region 2 - Missoula; Region 3 - Bozeman; Region 4 - Great Falls; Region 5 - Billings; Region 6 - Glasgow (Native fish interpretive display at Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, on the east side of town.); Region 7 - Miles City.

### ***Washoe Park Hatchery*** - Anaconda

**(Proposed completion—spring 1998)** Accessible restrooms and visitor area, live stream and display pond.



**APPENDIX I:**

**List of State Park Friends Groups**



## PARKS DIVISION SUPPORT GROUPS

Group	Appointed By	Interest
Bannack Association	n/a	Bannack SP
Trails Advisory Committee	Director	Trails
Boat Advisory Committee	Director	Motorboat, HB463
OHV Advisory Committee	Parks Administrator	OHV Program
Snowmobile Advisory Council	Parks Administrator	Snowmobile Program
Friends of Makoshika	n/a	Makoshika SP
Smith River Ad Hoc Committee	n/a	Smith River
Heritage Park Association	n/a	Giant Springs SP
Tourism Advisory Council	Governor	State Parks & Tourism
Mt. Tourism and Recreation Initiative	n/a	Tourism & impact on resources
Mt. State Parks Foundation	n/a	State Parks
Mt. Board of Outfitters	Governor	Outfitters
Ulm Pishkun Support Group	n/a	Ulm Pishkun SP
Mt. Tourism Coalition	n/a	Tourism
Friends of Chief Plenty Coups	n/a	Chief Plenty Coups SP
Bozeman Trail Foundation	n/a	Rosebud Battlefield
Blackfoot River Advisory Council	n/a	Blackfoot River
Save Our Stack Committee	n/a	Anaconda Stack SP
Cascade Historical Society	n/a	Ulm Pishkun
Montana Parks Association	n/a	All Parks
Montana State Parks & Wildlife Interpretive Association	n/a	All Parks
Giant Springs/Heritage State Park Commission	n/a	Giant Springs





**APPENDIX J:**

**Excerpt from Five Year Montana Strategic Plan  
for Travel and Tourism**



# Montana's Five Year Strategic Plan for Travel and Tourism: 1998-2002



## Acknowledgements

This plan is possible because of the commitment of Montana people and organizations. It was written by the people of Montana for the people of Montana and represents an incredible synergy of diverse groups around the state. The following groups/agencies provided input for the strategic plan.

AMPAC Parks & Resorts  
Blackfeet Planning Department  
Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB  
Bureau of Land Management  
Custer Country  
Delta Airlines  
Flathead Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Fort Peck Indian Reservation  
Fort Peck Lake  
Glacier Country  
Glacier/Waterton Visitor Association  
Gold West Country  
Great Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Helena Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research  
Kochman Consulting  
Missoula Cultural Council  
Missouri River Country  
Montana Ambassadors  
Montana Arts Council  
Montana Association of Chamber Executives  
Montana Bureau of Reclamation  
Montana Campground Association

Montana Committee for the Humanities  
Montana Dept. of Agriculture  
Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks  
Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation  
Montana Dept. of Transportation  
Montana Historical Society  
Montana Innkeepers Association  
Montana Ranch Vacation Association  
Montana Ski Areas Association  
Montana Snowmobile Association  
Montana State University – Extension  
Montana Tourism Coalition  
National Park Service  
Tourism Advisory Council  
Trail of the Great Bear  
Travel Montana  
Russell Country  
United State Fish and Wildlife Service  
United States Forest Service – Northern Region  
West Yellowstone Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Yellowstone Country  
1996 Attendees - MT Governor's Conf. on Tourism  
1997 Attendees - MT Governor's Conf. on Tourism

Regarding the success of this planning process, a special note of appreciation goes to Clint Blackwood of Travel Montana. Clint was instrumental in all aspects of this plan, especially generating the cooperative efforts of the public agencies. Without his concern and hard work, the strategic plan would not be what it is today.

A final note of thanks goes to the staff at the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research for their assistance throughout this 21-month process: Paul Grant, Kim McMahon, Josie Parrish, and Rita Black.

Cover Photo: Glacier National Park, Kintla Lake, by Ross Nickerson, 1997

Facilitated and compiled by Norma P. Nickerson, Director  
Designed by Kim McMahon

Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research  
School of Forestry, The University of Montana, Missoula, Montana

Technical Completion Report 97-2  
December 1997

**GOAL 1A) Determine, measure and monitor the positive and negative impacts (economic, social, environmental) of tourism and take action as appropriate** ➔

**GOAL 1B) Focus the promotion and development of MT's tourism industry upon the natural, historical, cultural and recreational resources the state has to offer**

**GOAL 1C) Conduct market and product research which collects information applicable to the objectives of this strategic plan**

**GOAL 1D) Support the resolution of land use conflicts involving residents, nonresidents, and commercial/recreation providers**

[illegible]



life and protecting natural, cultural, and recreational resources

17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
MT Innkeepers Assoc.	MSU Extension	MT Dept. of Agriculture	Glacier Country	National Park Service	Inst. for Tourism & Recr. Rsch.	West Yellowstone CVB	MT Dept. of FWP	AMPAC Parks & Resorts	Trail of the Great Bear	MT Historical Society	MT Dept. of Transportation	Tourism Advisory Council	Kochman Consulting	MT Bureau of Reclamation	MT Ambassadors	MT Ski Areas Assoc.	US Fish & Wildlife Service	MT Arts Council	MT Committee for Humanities	Bozeman Area COC	Glacier/Waterton Visitor Assoc.	Bozeman CVB	Blackfeet Planning Dept.
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## THEME 2: Support the development and maintenance of quality infrastructure

**GOAL 2A) Strive for consistent information signs across the state (includes roadway, interpretive, access, and trail)**

### Action Areas

2A1: Strengthen statewide public and private cooperation for signage improvements

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
MT Campground Assoc.	Travel Montana	MT Snowmobile Assoc.	Fort Peck Indian Res.	Fort Peck Lake	Russell County	Custer Country	Helena CVB	Dept. of Nat. Resc. & Cons.	Great Falls CVB	Missoula Cultural Council	Bureau of Land Management	Flathead CVB	Delta Airlines	MT Ranch Vacation Assoc.	USFS - Northern Region

**GOAL 2B) Encourage all forms of public transportation into and around the state**

### Action Areas

2B1: Assess public transportation gaps

2B2: Support existing public transportation

2B3: Distribute information about the various transportation services

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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**GOAL 2C) Encourage alternative transportation (i.e. shuttle and tour systems) in sensitive areas**

### Action Areas

2C1: Cooperatively develop alternative transportation systems

2C2: Distribute information regarding sensitive area transportation systems

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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**GOAL 2D) Enhance trail systems where necessary and appropriate**

### Action Areas

2D1: Solicit user input regarding trail systems

2D2: Improve and develop urban trail systems

2D3: Preserve, develop, and interpret historic trails

2D4: Participate in cooperative trail planning and development

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**GOAL 2E) Enhance and maintain long term legal access to public sites**

### Action Areas

2E1: Re-visit laws and regulations pertaining to public access

2E2: Build partnerships with private landowners and public land managers

2E3: Support easement acquisition, exchange and purchase of land with willing land owners for access to public lands

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**GOAL 2F) Identify and prioritize infrastructure needs**

### Action Areas

2F1: Identify statewide and regional infrastructure gaps and improvement needs

2F2: Develop and enhance rest areas

2F3: Seek, encourage, and develop tourism infrastructure funding

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MT Innkeepers Assoc.	MSU Extension	MT Dept. of Agriculture	Glacier Country	National Park Service	Inst. for Tourism & Recr. Rsch.	West Yellowstone CVB	MT Dept. of FWP	AMPAC Parks & Resorts	Trail of the Great Bear	MT Historical Society	MT Dept. of Transportation	Tourism Advisory Council	Kochman Consulting	MT Bureau of Reclamation	MT Ambassadors	MT Ski Areas Assoc.	US Fish & Wildlife Service	MT Arts Council	MT Committee for Humanities	Bozeman Area COC	Glacier/Waterton Visitor Assoc.	Bozeman CVB	Blackfeet Planning Dept.
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## THEME 3: Secure diversified long-range funding sources for tourism development and

**GOAL 3A) Continue accommodations tax as a funding source for tourism promotion and development**

### Action Areas

1 MT Campground Assoc.  
2 Travel Montana  
3 MT Snowmobile Assoc.  
4 Fort Peck Indian Res.  
5 Fort Peck Lake  
6 Russell County  
7 Custer County  
8 Helena CVB  
9 Dept. of Nat. Resc. & Cons.  
10 Great Falls CVB  
11 Missoula Cultural Council  
12 Bureau of Land Management  
13 Flathead CVB  
14 Delta Airlines  
15 MT Ranch Vacation Assoc.  
16 USFS - Northern Region

3A1: Increase public awareness of the tourism industry	*	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*		*		*	
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**GOAL 3B) Support federal and state funding for recreation and tourism programs**

### Action Areas

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

3B1: Increase public awareness of public funds available for recreation and tourism programs	*	*		*	*		*			*		*	*		*	*
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**GOAL 3C) Seek private industry funding**

### Action Areas

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

3C1: Maximize funding and support for tourism and recreation		*		*	*		*	*			*	*	*			
3C2: Foster the involvement of stakeholders in specific projects		*		*	*		*				*	*	*			*
3C3: Seek private funding and cost share opportunities for specific projects		*		*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*			*

**GOAL 3D) Educate residents and policy-makers regarding the impacts of tourism**

### Action Areas

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

3D1: Generate public support for the tourism industry	*			*		*	*	*		*	*		*	*		
3D2: Develop an education program	*	*		*		*	*						*			

**GOAL 3E) Nurture non-traditional partnerships of resident, government, and tourism industry people**

### Action Areas

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

3E1: Develop communication strategies which strengthen partnerships	*	*		*	*		*	*			*		*			*
3E2: Identify possible partners and eliminate barriers to those cooperative ventures	*	*		*	*		*				*	*	*			*



# omotions

17	MT Innkeepers Assoc.	18	MSU Extension	19	MT Dept. of Agriculture	20	Glacier Country	21	National Park Service	22	Inst. for Tourism & Recr. Resch.	23	West Yellowstone CVB	24	MT Dept. of FWP	25	AMPAC Parks & Resorts	26	Trail of the Great Bear	27	MT Historical Society	28	MT Dept. of Transportation	29	Tourism Advisory Council	30	Kochman Consulting	31	MT Bureau of Reclamation	32	MT Ambassadors	33	MT Ski Areas Assoc.	34	US Fish & Wildlife Service	35	MT Arts Council	36	MT Committee for Humanities	37	Bozeman Area COC	38	Glacier/Waterton Visitor Assoc.	39	Bozeman CVB	40	Blackfeet Planning Dept.
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## THEME 4: Extend the benefits of tourism throughout Montana

**GOAL 4A) Distribute tourism development and promotion by geography, season, resources and activity throughout the state**

### Action Areas

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
MT Campground Assoc.	Travel Montana	MT Snowmobile Assoc.	Fort Peck Indian Res.	Fort Peck Lake	Russell County	Custer Country	Helena CVB	Dept. of Nat. Resc. & Cons.	Great Falls CVB	Missoula Cultural Council	Bureau of Land Management	Flathead CVB	Delta Airlines	MT Ranch Vacation Assoc.	USFS - Northern Region

4A1: Promote the total Montana experience by encouraging visitation throughout the state	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4A2: Develop collaborative systems within regions	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*		*			*
4A3: Develop opportunities for shoulder season visitation	*	*		*		*	*			*		*	*		*
4A4: Include every pertinent group in tourism development and planning	*	*		*	*	*	*			*		*			*
4A5: Attract and accommodate a diverse visitorship	*	*			*	*	*			*		*	*		*

**GOAL 4B) Continue appropriate rural tourism development**

### Action Areas

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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4B1: Improve assistance to rural communities		*				*									*
4B2: Improve access to rural tourism development resources		*		*		*									*
4B3: Continue tourism development education programs (business, community leaders, residents)		*		*		*	*			*	*	*			

**GOAL 4C) Increase state-wide visitor expenditures through appropriate tourism development and promotion**

### Action Areas

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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4C1: Improve tourism infrastructure to encourage longer stays		*		*	*	*			*	*		*			*
4C2: Identify and promote all visitor options		*		*		*	*		*	*		*			*
4C3: Increase collaborative marketing between large and small communities		*				*	*	*				*			*

**GOAL 4D): Develop and promote the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial**

### Action Areas

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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4D1: Help the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission coordinate activities		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*				*
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MT Innkeepers Assoc.	MSU Extension	MT Dept. of Agriculture	Glacier Country	National Park Service	Inst. for Tourism & Recl. Rsch.	West Yellowstone CVB	MT Dept. of FWP	AMPAC Parks & Resorts	Trail of the Great Bear	MT Historical Society	MT Dept. of Transportation	Tourism Advisory Council	Kochman Consulting	MT Bureau of Reclamation	MT Ambassadors	MT Ski Areas Assoc.	US Fish & Wildlife Service	MT Arts Council	MT Committee for Humanities	Bozeman Area COC	Glacier/Waterton Visitor Assoc.	Bozeman CVB	Blackfeet Planning Dept.
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## THEME 5: Strive for quality visitor experiences

### GOAL 5A) Monitor visitor experience and satisfaction

#### Action Areas

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
5A1: Identify methods to monitor visitor satisfaction and improve visitor services	*	*	*	*	*		*					*	*			*

### GOAL 5B) Encourage training programs for companies/organizations who deal with visitors

#### Action Areas

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
5B1: Enhance customer service training in the public and private sectors		*		*	*		*	*					*			*
5B2: Develop a workforce through training programs		*		*	*			*								
5B3: Provide technical assistance for tourism providers		*		*	*			*				*				

### GOAL 5C) Recognize and address the needs of international travelers

#### Action Areas

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
5C1: Identify the needs of Montana's international visitor		*					*				*		*	*		
5C2: Develop tourism information to be "user friendly" for the international visitor		*					*	*			*		*			*

### GOAL 5D) Develop and Implement effective delivery of travel information

#### Action Areas

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
5D1: Utilize multi-media (electronic, printed, signage) for distributing travel information		*		*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*			*
5D2: Foster public and private coordination of the establishment and operation of visitor information centers		*		*	*		*	*		*			*			*
5D3: Create public/private regional partnerships for travel information dissemination		*		*		*	*	*				*	*			*



17	MT Innkeepers Assoc.	*
18	MSU Extension	*
19	MT Dept. of Agriculture	*
20	Glacier Country	*
21	National Park Service	*
22	Inst. for Tourism & Recr. Rsch.	*
23	West Yellowstone CVB	*
24	MT Dept. of FWP	*
25	AMPAC Parks & Resorts	*
26	Trail of the Great Bear	*
27	MT Historical Society	*
28	MT Dept. of Transportation	*
29	Tourism Advisory Council	*
30	Kochman Consulting	*
31	MT Bureau of Reclamation	*
32	MT Ambassadors	*
33	MT Ski Areas Assoc.	*
34	US Fish & Wildlife Service	*
35	MT Arts Council	*
36	MT Committee for Humanities	*
37	Bozeman Area COC	*
38	Glacier/Waterton Visitor Assoc.	*
39	Bozeman CVB	*
40	Blackfeet Planning Dept.	*

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**APPENDIX K:**

**Plant and Animal Species with Special Status  
in Montana State Parks**





August 20, 1997

Montana Natural Heritage Program  
Species of Special Concern Within and Near State Parks

FWP SITE	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	G RANK	S RANK	ESA	STATES
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Species of Special Concern Occurring Within Park Boundaries

BANNACK	BRACHYLAGUS IDAHOENSIS	PYGMY RABBIT	G4	S2S3		NG
BANNACK	LESQUERELLA PULCHELLA	BEAUTIFUL BLADDERPOD	G2	S2		
BANNACK	LOMATIUM ATTENUATUM	TAPER-TIP DESERT-PARSLEY	G2	S2		
BANNACK	PHACELIA INCANA	HOARY PHACELIA	G3G4	S2		
BANNACK	SPHAEROMERIA ARGENTEA	CHICKEN SAGE	G3	S2		
COUNCIL GROVE	CAREX SCOPARIA	POINTED BROOM SEDGE	G5	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE - BIG ARM	OXYTROPS CAMPESTRIS VAR COLUMBIANA	COLUMBIA CRAZYWEED	G5T3Q	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE - WILD HORSE ISLAND	HALIAEETUS LEUCOCEPHALUS	BALD EAGLE	G4	S3B,S3N	LTLE	P
FLATHEAD LAKE - WILD HORSE ISLAND	SILENE SPALDINGII	SPALDING'S CAMPION	G2	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	ONGORHYNCHUS CLARKI LEWISI	WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT	G4T3	S3		GF
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	CAREX TINCTA	SLENDER SEDGE	G4G5	SU		
FRENCHTOWN POND	ELATINE BRACHYSPERMA	SHORT-SEEDED WATER-WORT	G5	SU		
LEWIS AND CLARK CAVERNS	CORYNORHINUS TOWNSENDII	TOWNSEND'S BIG-EARED BAT	G4	S2S3		NG
LOST CREEK	FALCO PEREGRINUS	PEREGRINE FALCON	G4	S1S2B,S2N	E/SA	E
MEDICINE ROCKS	ASCLEPIAS STENOPHYLLA	NARROWLEAF MILKWEED	G4G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	CHENOPODIUM SUBGLABRUM	SMOOTH GOOSEFOOT	G3	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	CYPERUS SCHWEINITZII	SCHWEINITZ' FLATSEEDGE	G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	DALEA VILLOSA	SILKY PRAIRIE CLOVER	G5T7	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	MIRABILIS HIRSUTA	HAIRY FOUR-O'CLOCK	G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	PENSTEMON ANGUSTIFOLIUS	NARROWLEAF PENSTEMON	G5	S2		
MEDICINE ROCKS	PHLOX ANDICOLA	PLAINS PHLOX	G4	S1		
PLACID LAKE	GRINDELIA HOWELLII	HOWELL'S GUM-WEED	G3	S2S3		
WHITEFISH LAKE	CYPRIPEDIUM PARVIFLORUM	SMALL YELLOW LADY'S-SLIPPER	G5	S2S3		
Species of Special Concern Occurring Within 1,500 Meters of State Parks						
BANNACK	BRACHYLAGUS IDAHOENSIS	PYGMY RABBIT	G4	S2S3		NG
BANNACK	ASTRAGALUS SCAPHOIDES	BITTERROOT MILKWEICH	G3	S2		
BANNACK	LESQUERELLA PULCHELLA	BEAUTIFUL BLADDERPOD	G2	S2		
BANNACK	LOMATIUM ATTENUATUM	TAPER-TIP DESERT-PARSLEY	G2	S2		
BANNACK	PHACELIA INCANA	HOARY PHACELIA	G3G4	S2		
BANNACK	SPHAEROMERIA ARGENTEA	CHICKEN SAGE	G3	S2		

Montana Natural Heritage Program  
Species of Special Concern Within and Near State Parks

FWP SITE	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	G RANK	S RANK	ESA	STATE
BEAVERHEAD ROCK	ELEOCHARIS ROSTELLATA	BEAKED SPIKERUSH	G5	S2		
BEAVERTAIL HILL	OREOMELIX CARINIFERA	KEELED MOUNTAIN SNAIL	G1	S1		NONE
FLATHEAD LAKE - WILD HORSE ISLAND	OXYTROPIS CAMPESTRIS VAR COLUMBIANA	COLUMBIA CRAZYWEED	G5T30	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE - WILD HORSE ISLAND	SILENE SPALDINGII	SPALDING'S CAMPION	G2	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	ONCORHYNCHUS CLARKI LEWISI	WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT	G4T3	S3		GF
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	HALLIAETUS LEUCOCEPHALUS	BALD EAGLE	G4	S3B, S3N		LTLE P
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	STAGNICOLA ELRODII	FLATHEAD POND SNAIL	G1	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	CAREX TINCTA	SLENDER SEDGE	G4G5	SU		
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	EPIPACTIS GIGANTEA	GIANT HELLEBORINE	G4	S2		
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	ERIGERON EATONII SSP EATONII	EATON'S DAISY	G5T5	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	OENOGLOSSUM PUSILLUM	ADDER'S TONGUE	G5	S2		
FLATHEAD LAKE - YELLOW BAY	STATE CHAMPION TREE	STATE CHAMPION TREE	2	2		
FORT OMEN	CYPERUS RIVULARIS	SHINING FLATSEDEGE	G5	S1		
FORT OMEN	HETEROCODON RARIFLORUM	WESTERN PEARL- FLOWER	G5	S1		
FORT OMEN	WOLFFIA COLUMBIANA	COLUMBIA WATER-HEAL	G5	S2		
FRENCHTOWN POND	ELATINE BRACHYSPERMA	SHORT-SEEDED WATER-WORT	G5	SU		
HELL CREEK	ASTRAGALUS GEYERI	GEYER'S MILKVETCH	G3G4T3T4	S2		
LAKE MARY RONAN	CAENIS YOUNGI	A MAYFLY	G3	S2		NONE
LEWIS AND CLARK CAVERNS	CORYNORHINUS TOWNSENDII	TOWNSEND'S BIG-EARED BAT	G4	S2S3		NG
MAKOSHIOKA	LINARIA CANADENSIS	BLUE TOADFLAX	G4G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	ASCLEPIAS STENOPHYLLA	NARROWLEAF MILKWEED	G4G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	CHENOPODIUM SUBGLABRUM	SMOOTH GOOSEFOOT	G3	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	CYPERUS SCHWEINITZII	SCHWEINITZ' FLATSEDEGE	G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	DALEA VILLOSA	SILKY PRAIRIE CLOVER	G5T7	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	MIRABILIS HIRSUTA	HAIRY FOUR-O'CLOCK	G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	PENSTEMON ANGUSTIFOLIUS	NARROWLEAF PENSTEMON	G5	S2		
MEDICINE ROCKS	PHLOX ANDICOLA	PLAINS PHLOX	G4	S1		
MISSOURI HEADWATERS	BIRD ROOKERY	BIRD ROOKERY	2	2		
NATURAL BRIDGE	FALCO PEREGRINUS	PEREGRINE FALCON	G4	S1S2B, S2N	E/SA	E
NATURAL BRIDGE	DISCUS SHIMEKI	STRIATE DISC	G4	S1		NONE
PAINTED ROCKS	PENSTEMON LEMHIENSIS	LEMHI BEAR TONGUE	G3	S2		
SALMON LAKE	GAVIA IMMER	COMMON LOON	G5	S1S2B, S2N		P

Montana Natural Heritage Program  
Species of Special Concern Within and Near State Parks

FWP SITE	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	G RANK	S RANK	ESA	STATE S
SALMON LAKE	BIDENS BECKII	BECK WATER-MARIGOLD	G4G5TU	S2		
SALMON LAKE	NYMPHAEA TETRAGONA	PYGMY WATER-LILY	G5	S1		
WHITEFISH LAKE	CYPRIPEDIUM PARVIFLORUM	SMALL YELLOW LADY'S-SLIPPER	G5	S2S3		
Species of Special Concern Occurring Within 8,000 Meters of State Parks						
BANNACK	BUTEO REGALIS	FERRUGINOUS HAWK	G4	S3B, SZN	P	
BANNACK	BRACHYLAGUS IDAHOENSIS	PYGHY RABBIT	G4	S2S3	NG	
BANNACK	PEROGNATHUS PARVUS	GREAT BASIN POCKET MOUSE	G5	S2S4	NG	
BANNACK	ASTRAGALUS SCAPHOIDES	BITTERROOT MILKVETCH	G3	S2		
BANNACK	ASTRAGALUS TERMINALIS	RAILHEAD MILKVETCH	G3G4	S2		
BANNACK	LESQUERELLA PULCHELLA	BEAUTIFUL BLADDERPOD	G2	S2		
BANNACK	LOMATIUM ATTENUATUM	TAPER-TIP DESERT-PARSLEY	G2	S2		
BANNACK	PHACELIA INCANA	HOARY PHACELIA	G3G4	S2		
BANNACK	SPHAEROMERIA ARGENTEA	CHICKEN SAGE	G3	S2		
BEAVERHEAD ROCK	ELEOCHARIS ROSTELLATA	BEAKED SPIKERUSH	G5	S2		
BEAVERHEAD ROCK	PRIMULA INCANA	HEALY PRIMROSE	G4G5	S2		
BEAVERHEAD ROCK	SPIRANTHES DILUVIALIS	UTE LADIES' TRESSES	G2	S1	LT	
BEAVERTAIL HILL	OREDHIELIX CARINIFERA	KEELED MOUNTAINSNAIL	G1	S1	NONE	
BEAVERTAIL HILL	OREOHIELIX SP 7	KITCHEN CREEK MOUNTAINSNAIL	G1G2	S1S2		
BLACK SANDY	AECHEPHORUS CLARKII	CLARK'S GREBE	G5	S2S4B, SZN	P	
CHIEF PLENTY COUPS	EUPATORIUM MACULATUM	JOE-PYE WEED	G5TU	S1		
COUNCIL GROVE	ELATINE BRACHYSPERMA	SHORT-SEEDED WATER-WORT	G5	SU		
ELKHORN	MYOTIS THYSANODES	FRINGED MYOTIS	G5	S3	NG	
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	CAENIS YOUNGI	A MAYFLY	G3	S2	NONE	
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	ARCTOSTAPHYLOS PATULA	GREEN-LEAF MANZANITA	G4	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	BOTRYCHIDIUM MONTANUM	MOUNTAIN MOONWORT	G3	S2		
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	CAREX COMOSA	BRISTLY SEDGE	G5	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	CAREX TINCTA	SLENDER SEDGE	G4G5	SU		
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	CYPRIPEDIUM FASCICULATUM	CLUSTERED LADY'S-SLIPPER	G4	S2		
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	ERIGERON EATONII SSP EATONII	EATON'S DAISY	G575	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	OPHIOGLOSSUM PUSILLUM	ADDER'S TONGUE	G5	S2		
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	OXYTROPIS CANPESTRIS VAR COLUMBIANA	COLUMBIA CRAZYWEED	G573Q	S1		
FLATHEAD LAKE-WILD HORSE ISLAND	SILENE SPALDINGII	SPALDING'S CAMPION	G2	S1		
FORT OWEN	ACCIPITER GENTILIS	NORTHERN GOSHAWK	G5	S3S4	P	

Montana Natural Heritage Program  
Species of Special Concern Within and Near State Parks

FWP SITE	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	G RANK	S RANK	ESA	STATE STA
FORT OWEN	CAREX SCOPARIA	POINTED BROOM SEDGE	G5	S1		
FORT OWEN	CYPERUS RIVULARIS	SHINING FLATSEDE	G5	S1		
FORT OWEN	EUPATORIUM OCCIDENTALE	WESTERN BONESET	G4	S1		
FORT OWEN	HETEROCOON RARIFLORUM	WESTERN PEARL- FLOWER	G5	S1		
FORT OWEN	MYOSOTIS VERNA	EARLY FORGET-ME-NOT	G5	S1		
FORT OWEN	NAJAS GUADALUPENSIS	GUADALUPE WATER-NYMPH	G5	S1		
FORT OWEN	TRIFOLIUM CYATHIFERUM	CUP CLOVER	G4	S1		
FORT OWEN	WOLFFIA COLUMBIANA	COLUMBIA WATER-MEAL	G5	S2		
GIANT SPRINGS/HERITAGE PARK	BACOPA ROTUNDIFOLIA	ROUNDLEAF WATER-NYSSOP	G5	S1		
GIANT SPRINGS/HERITAGE PARK	CAREX SYCHNOCEPHALA	MANY-HEADED SEDGE	G4	S1		
GIANT SPRINGS/HERITAGE PARK	CENTUNCULUS MINIMUS	CHAFFWEED	G5	S1		
HELL CREEK	ASTRAGALUS GEYERI	GEYER'S MILKVETCH	G3G4T3T4	S2		
LOVE PINE	CAREX STENOPTILA	SMALL-WINGED SEDGE	G3?	S1		
MAKOSHICA	STERNA ANTILLARUM ATHALASSOS	INTERIOR LEAST TERN	G4T20	S1B, S2N	LENL	P
MAKOSHICA	SOREX PREBLEI	PREBLE'S SHREW	G4	S3		NG
MAKOSHICA	CELASTRUS SCANDENS	BITTERSWEET	G5	S1		
MAKOSHICA	LINARIA CANADENSIS	BLUE TOADFLAX	G4G5	S1		
MAKOSHICA	MENTZELIA NUDA	BRACITLESS MENTZELIA	G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	ASCLEPIAS STENOPHYLLA	NARROWLEAF MILKWEED	G4G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	CHENOPODIUM SUBGLABRUM	SMOOTH GOOSEFOOT	G3	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	DALEA VILLOSA	SILKY PRAIRIE CLOVER	G5T?	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	MIRABILIS HIRSUJA	HAIKY FOUR-O'CLOCK	G5	S1		
MEDICINE ROCKS	PENSTEMON ANGUSTIFOLIUS	NARROWLEAF PENSTEMON	G5	S2		
MEDICINE ROCKS	PHLOX ANDICOLA	PLAINS PHLOX	G4	S1		
NATURAL BRIDGE	DISCUS SHIMEKI	STRIATE DISC	G4	S1		NONE
PAINTED ROCKS	ALLIUM PARVUM	DWARF ONION	G5	S2		
PAINTED ROCKS	ALLOTROPA VIRGATA	CANDYSTICK	G4	S3		
PAINTED ROCKS	CASTILLEJA COVILLEANA	COVILLE INDIAN PAINTBRUSH	G3G4	S2		
PAINTED ROCKS	CHRYSOSPLENIUM TETRANDRUM	NORTHERN GOLDEN-CARPET	G5	S3		
PAINTED ROCKS	GLOSSOPETALON NEVADENSE	SPINY GREENBUSH	G5?0	S1		
PAINTED ROCKS	HAPLOPAPPUS ABERRANS	IDAHO GOLDEN-WEED	G3	S1		
PAINTED ROCKS	PENSTEMON LEHMIENSIS	LEHMI BEARDTONGUE	G3	S2		
PAINTED ROCKS	PENSTEMON PAYETTENSIS	PAYETTE BEARDTONGUE	G4	S1		
PAINTED ROCKS	TRIFOLIUM ERIOCEPHALUM	WOOLLY-HEAD CLOVER	G4T3	S1		
PAINTED ROCKS	TRIFOLIUM GYMNOCARPON	HOLLYLEAF CLOVER	G4	S2		
PARKER HOMESTEAD	CORYNORHINUS TOWNSENDII	TOWNSEND'S BIG-EARED BAT	G4	S2S3		NG
PARKER HOMESTEAD	CASTILLEJA EXILIS	ANNUAL INDIAN PAINTBRUSH	G5	S2		
PARKER HOMESTEAD	BIRD_ROOKERY	BIRD ROOKERY	Z	Z		



Montana Natural Heritage Program  
Species of Special Concern Within and Near State Parks

FWP SITE	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	GRANK	S RANK	ESA	STATE STA
PICTOGRAPH CAVE CONSERV.-ES.	LAMPROPELTIS TRIANGULUM	MILK SNAKE	G5	S2		NG
PICTOGRAPH CAVE CONSERV.-ES.	FALCO PEREGRINUS	PEREGRINE FALCON	G4	S1S2B, S2N	E/SA	E
PICTOGRAPH CAVE CONSERV.-ES.	EUDERMA MACULATUM	SPOTTED BAT	G4	S1		NG
PIROGUE ISLAND	POLYOON SPATHULA	PADDOLEFISH	G4	S1S2		GFRH
PIROGUE ISLAND	CYCLEPTUS ELONGATUS	BLUE SUCKER	G4	S3?		NG
PIROGUE ISLAND	BIDENS FRONDOSA		G5	SU		
PIROGUE ISLAND	CYPERUS ACUMINATUS	SHORT-POINTED FLATSEDGE	G5	S1		
PIROGUE ISLAND	CYPERUS SCHWEINITZII	SCHWEINITZ' FLATSEDGE	G5	S1		
SALMON LAKE	STRIX NEBULOSA	GREAT GRAY OWL	G5	S3		P
SALMON LAKE	PICOIDES ARCTICUS	BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER	G5	S3		P
SALMON LAKE	STAGNICOLA ELRODI	FLATHEAD PONDSNAIL	G1	S1		
SALMON LAKE	BIDENS BECKII	BECK WATER-MARIGOLD	G4G5TU	S2		
SALMON LAKE	CRINDELIA HOWELLII	HOWELL'S GUM-WEED	G3	S2S3		
SALMON LAKE	POTAMOGETON OBTUSIFOLIUS	BLUNT-LEAVED PONDWEED	G5	S2		
SPRING MEADOW LAKE	ASTRAGALUS CONVALLARIUS	LESSER RUSHY MILKVETCH	G5T5	S2		
SPRING MEADOW LAKE	ATRIPLEX TRUNCATA	WEDGE-LEAVED SALTBUSH	G5	S1		
SPRING MEADOW LAKE	STATE CHAMPTON TREE	STATE CHAMPTON TREE	Z	Z		
THOMPSON FALLS	ONCORHYNCHUS CLARKI LEWISI	WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT	G4T3	S3		GF
THOMPSON FALLS	ZACOLEUS IDAHOENSIS	SWEATHED SLUG	G3G4	S1S2		
THOMPSON FALLS	SYELLARIA CRASSIFOLIA	FLESHY STITCHMORT	G5	S1		
TONGUE RIVER RESERVOIR	ASTRAGALUS BARBII	BARR'S MILKVETCH	G3	S3		
TONGUE RIVER RESERVOIR	PHYSARIA DIDYMOCARPA VAR LANATA	WOOLLY TWINPOD	G5T2	SU		
WHITEFISH LAKE	GAVIA IMMER	COMMON LOON	G5	S1S2B, S2N		P
WHITEFISH LAKE	HALIAEETUS LEUCOCEPHALUS	BALD EAGLE	G4	S3B, S3N		P
WHITEFISH LAKE	AMMOORAMUS LEONTEII	LE CONTE'S SPARROW	G4	S1S2B, S2N	LTLE	P
WHITEFISH LAKE	ENALLAGHA OPTIMOLUCUS	LAST BEST PLACE DAMSELFLY	G?	S1S3		
WHITEFISH LAKE	BRASENIA SCHREBERI	WATERSHIELD	G5	S2		
WHITEFISH LAKE	CYPRIPEDIUM PARVIFLORUM	SMALL YELLOW LADY'S-SLIPPER	G5	S2S3		
WHITEFISH LAKE	DRYOPTERIS CRISTATA	BUCKLER FERN	G5	S2		
WHITEFISH LAKE	EPIPACTIS GIGANTEA	GIANT HELLEBORINE	G4	S2		
WHITEFISH LAKE	HALENIA DEFLEXA	SPURRED GENTIAN	G5TU	S2		
WHITEFISH LAKE	NYMPHAEA TETRAGONA	PYGMY WATER-LILY	G5	S1		
WHITEFISH LAKE	SCIRPUS SUBTERMINALIS	WATER BULKUSH	G4G5	S2		
WHITEFISH LAKE	VIOLA RENIFOLIA	KIDNEY-LEAF WHITE VIOLET	G5	S3		



## **APPENDIX L:**

### **Draft Outcomes and Performance Measures for Trails and Watchable Wildlife Programs**





## **PARKS PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

The four outcome areas developed for Parks Programs are discussed below, along with goals and performance measures. The outcomes are the final results of a program or project, as judged by the people who are the intended recipients. The outcomes were developed for three programs within the Parks Division--state parks, trails, and watchable wildlife. While the state parks outcomes are the most directly applicable to this plan, the other two are also included here because of the many interconnections between programs. Parks program outcome areas are as follows:

- 1) Protection and Enhancement of Resources
- 2) Exceeding Visitor Expectations
- 3) Tourism and Economic Stability
- 4) Education and Interpretation

The Park Program outcomes were crafted to be broad enough to include everything of significance that Montana State Parks provide for the public, including elements discussed in other parts of this Plan. The outcomes are similar to the mission of the park system laid out in the 1939 Enabling Act, which suggests a substantial degree of consistency in respect to what state parks are intended to accomplish. Perhaps the most notable change since the park system was established has been the increasing importance of education and interpretation.

In order to successfully achieve these Parks Program outcomes, there will need close cooperation with staff from throughout FWP. One of the primary intents of the outcomes process was to ensure that all FWP programs are administered with inter-disciplinary involvement from throughout the agency. Although programs are physically housed in various divisions, they necessarily affect and need to be affected by staff from other parts of the agency.

The goals listed under the state parks program element are generally similar to the goals listed in the "Looking Toward 2020" section of this Plan, although they were developed using different processes and are sometimes organized and phrased differently. In addition to goals, performance measures are also listed, and will be used to monitor program success from a variety of perspectives. The Six Year Plan--which will follow this document and address all programs in the Division--will be the document that more fully implements and refines the outcomes, goals, and performance measures listed here.

Goals and performance measures for the Watchable Wildlife and Trails Programs, in particular, should be considered preliminary. The Parks Division is in the process of

completing a Montana State Trails Plan, as well as a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) on FWP trail grant programs. Final goals and performance measures can not be completed until these documents are finished. The Watchable Wildlife Program will likely be moved out of the Parks Division in 1998; the new managers of this program will likely revisit the material included here.

## **Outcome 1: Protection and Enhancement of Resources**

*Parks programs where natural, historical, cultural, and recreational resources are enhanced and protected in perpetuity.*

### **Program Element: State Parks**

- GOAL 1:** Work to ensure that key resources in (and adjacent to) parks are adequately inventoried and protected.
- GOAL 2:** Work cooperatively to inventory and preserve key unprotected or under represented Montana resources.
- GOAL 3:** Educate the public on the value of and need for long-term resource protection and care.
- GOAL 4:** Maintain park sites to a high standard of maintenance.
- GOAL 5:** Adequately protect park resources through enforcement, management and design.

#### **Performance Measures:**

1. User satisfaction with facilities (both quality and quantity/diversity).
2. Public use at State Parks.
3. Frequency of reported conflicts with adjacent landowners.
4. Numbers of users contacted by enforcement personnel; number of incidents, number of citations issued and types of violations.
5. Number of successful cooperative ventures in both acquisition and maintenance of State Parks.
6. Number and type of State Parks and number of acres open to public recreation.
7. Inventory threats to parks and track progress in addressing them (includes both exterior threats and internal problems, like inholdings).
8. Specific measures designed to periodically assess and monitor the health of natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

## **Program Element: Trails**

- GOAL 1:** Ensure trails are effectively integrated with local and statewide land use and transportation planning.
- GOAL 2:** Provide more local trails, greenways and trail connections for recreation and transportation in and between Montana's urban areas.
- GOAL 3:** Preserve and improve trail opportunities for all Montanans and visitors.
- GOAL 4:** Educate trail users and potential trails users about resource protection.

### **Performance Measures:**

1. User satisfaction and frequency of use of trail facilities and resources along trails.
2. Frequency of reported conflicts among trail users.
3. Frequency of reported conflicts with adjacent landowners.
4. Number of trail users contacted by enforcement personnel; number of citations issued and types of violations.
5. Number of successful cooperative acquisition and maintenance efforts.
6. Number of miles of trails closed by the managing agency during the year.
7. Number of trail miles maintained through grant program.
8. Number of new trail miles constructed through grant program, by type.

## **Program Element: Watchable Wildlife**

- GOAL 1:** Increase awareness and knowledge of the need for biological diversity.
- GOAL 2:** Increase awareness and knowledge of the need for protection of natural resources.

### **Performance Measures:**

1. User satisfaction with Watchable Wildlife facilities.
2. Public awareness of Watchable Wildlife sites.
3. Number of successful cooperative ventures in both acquisition and maintenance of Watchable Wildlife sites.
4. Number of sites for wildlife viewing.
5. Number of new sites added per annum.

## **Outcome 2: Exceeding Visitor Expectations:**

*Parks programs where visitor expectations are met or exceeded due to the quality of the experience.*

### **Program Element: State Parks**

- GOAL 1:** Maintain State Parks to a high standard of maintenance and cleanliness.
- GOAL 2:** Provide a diversity of opportunity.
- GOAL 3:** Conserve a representative diversity of Montana's cultural, natural and recreational resources.
- GOAL 4:** Provide resource personnel on site. including staff, volunteers, or interns.
- GOAL 5:** Provide a satisfactory level of law enforcement to protect park visitors.
- GOAL 6:** Provide diverse interpretive programs, educational opportunities, visitor information, and special events.
- GOAL 7:** Examine current procedures to see where changes in specific design operations, and maintenance standards would result in improvements.
- GOAL 8:** Complete management plan for every park in the system.
- GOAL 9:** Improve parks-related data collection (both internal, as well as larger trends).
- GOAL 10:** Improve cooperation with other agencies and groups.
- GOAL 11:** Facilitate an understanding of state parks, their condition, funding and public expectations with park users and elected officials.

#### **Performance Measures:**

1. User satisfaction with facilities.
2. Public knowledge about Montana State Parks and what they offer.
3. Number of new or improved state park opportunities provided.
4. Number of complaints received.
5. Number of compliments.
6. Number of violation notices/notice to appear.
7. User satisfaction with programs and special events.
8. Frequency of reported conflicts between park users.
9. Track management plan progress.
10. Complete inventory of potential park sites; track progress toward long-term protection.
11. Monitor improvements in data collection.
12. Track implementation of standards and how standards affect visitor satisfaction.
13. Continue to track numbers of volunteers and interns.
14. Track cooperation with other agencies and groups.



## **Program Element: Trails**

- GOAL 1: Maintain trails at a high standard of maintenance.
- GOAL 2: Improve awareness among users about what kinds of conditions and uses to expect on trails.
- GOAL 3: Provide a diversity of trail opportunities.
- GOAL 4: Reduce conflicts among users and improve etiquette.
- GOAL 5: Work to more effectively use volunteers on trail-related work.
- GOAL 6: Ensure that trail users and groups have ample opportunity to be involved in trail-related decisions.
- GOAL 7: Prioritize, plan for, secure, and maintain access to public trails.
- GOAL 8: Improve enforcement of trail regulations.
- GOAL 9: Improve coordination between managing agencies and other partners.
- GOAL 10: Improve funding for non-motorized trail programs.

### Performance Measures:

1. User satisfaction with facilities, programs, and services (including FWP grant programs).
2. Knowledge of preconceived public expectations--measure of how these change based on education and information.
3. Number of disabled accessible trail miles.
4. Number of new or improved trail opportunities provided.
5. Number of complaints and compliments received.
6. Number of access areas added or preserved.
7. Number of cooperative efforts between managing agencies, and between agencies and trail groups and other partners.
8. Satisfaction among users and groups with adequacy of public involvement and project/program information.
9. Monitor volunteer numbers and satisfaction of volunteers.
10. Amount of funding available for non-motorized trail programs.

## **Program Element: Watchable Wildlife**

- GOAL 1: Maintain Watchable Wildlife sites to a high standard of maintenance and cleanliness.
- GOAL 2: Maintain the quality of Watchable Wildlife interpretation to a high standard.
- GOAL 3: Increase the success rate of seeing wildlife, and understanding its relationship to habitat.

Performance Measures:

1. User satisfaction with programs and materials.
2. Increased public knowledge of wildlife and their habitat.

**Outcome 3: Tourism and Economic Stability**

*Parks programs which contribute to Montana's tourism industry and general economic stability.*

**Program Element: State Parks**

- GOAL 1: Continue to form partnerships with local tourism organizations, support groups, etc.
- GOAL 2: Integrate state parks programs into local, statewide, and national promotional efforts carried out by the tourism industry.
- GOAL 3: Provide a diverse range of developed and undeveloped parks interpretive programs, educational opportunities, and special events.
- GOAL 4: Establish park(s) in each FWP administrative region.
- GOAL 5: Assure that promotion and resource protection are balanced for long-term sustainable tourism.

Performance Measures:

1. Resident and non-resident visitation.
2. Visitor spending patterns.
3. Park acquisition.
4. Number of cooperative efforts with local organizations.

**Program Element: Trails**

- GOAL 1: Integrate trails programs into local, statewide, and national promotional efforts carried out by the tourism industry.
- GOAL 2: Manage and promote some trails as destination attractions.
- GOAL 3: Improve research on economic benefits of trails; distribute information broadly.
- GOAL 4: Use promotional efforts and marketing as tools to disperse and manage use while improving coordination between trail managers and the tourism industry.

### Performance Measures:

1. Spending patterns of trail users.
2. Number of trail users (resident and non-resident).
3. Evaluate and monitor local trail-related economic impacts.
4. Number of trails promotional efforts by tourism industry.

### **Program Element: Watchable Wildlife**

GOAL 1: Integrate the Watchable Wildlife Program into local, statewide, and national promotional efforts carried out by the tourism industry.

GOAL 2: Provide products and services to encourage visitation.

GOAL 3: Provide training opportunities to learn about Watchable Wildlife Programs.

### Performance Measures:

1. Number of visitors to Watchable Wildlife sites.
2. Spending patterns of Watchable Wildlife participants.
3. Number of participants at training opportunities.
4. Sales of Watchable Wildlife products.

### **Outcome 4: Education and Interpretation**

*Parks programs which provide outstanding education and interpretation of Montana's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.*

### **Program Element: State Parks**

GOAL 1: Continue to form partnerships with other organizations involved in education and interpretation. Work to integrate state parks education and interpretation programs with similar local, statewide, and national efforts.

GOAL 2: Provide a diverse range of developed and undeveloped parks interpretive programs, educational opportunities, and special events.

GOAL 3: Work to improve education and interpretation programmatically, across FWP divisions.

GOAL 4: Utilize State Parks education and interpretation efforts to inform residents and visitors about ways to conserve and enhance Montana's natural, cultural, and recreational resource.

GOAL 5: Continue to improve educational programs with Montana's schools.

### Performance Measures:

1. Satisfaction with State Parks education and interpretation efforts (both state-wide and park-specific).
2. Number of education and interpretation programs and materials produced.
3. Number of cooperative efforts within FWP.
4. Number of cooperative efforts with outside organizations.

### **Program Element: Trails**

- GOAL 1: Continue to work on improving coordination on trails-related education within FWP.
- GOAL 2: Continue to work on improving coordination on trails-related education between FWP and other agencies and organizations.
- GOAL 3: Use trails as a vehicle for helping interpret the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of Montana.
- GOAL 4: Use education as a critical means for improving awareness and understanding of key trail-use issues, including user conflicts, etiquette, resource impacts, access, accessibility, enforcement, and safety.
- GOAL 6: Use the Trails Program as tool to help educate people about both time-tested and innovative methods for planning, funding, acquiring, constructing, and maintaining trails.
- GOAL 7: Improve awareness among users about what kinds of conditions and uses to expect on trails.
- GOAL 8: Educate trail users about the importance of volunteer efforts, and provide information about opportunities.

### Performance Measures:

1. Number and severity of trail-related user conflicts, as well as conflicts between users and non-users.
2. Number and severity of trail-related resource impacts.
3. Number of partnerships on trail-related education programs.
4. Public attitudes about extent and severity of trail-related conflict.
5. Monitor volunteer numbers and satisfaction of volunteers.
6. Number of grant program applicants.
7. Public knowledge about the FWP Trails Program.
8. Agency knowledge of public's preconceived expectations and opinions, and measurement of how these change based on education and information.
9. Satisfaction among users and groups with adequacy of public involvement and project/program information.



## **Program Element: Watchable Wildlife**

- GOAL 1:** Use the Watchable Wildlife Program as a vehicle for educating people about the full range of Montana's wildlife and habitat types, and the forces which threaten their long-term future.
- GOAL 2:** Coordinate Watchable Wildlife with the efforts of related programs managed by other entities.
- GOAL 3:** Creatively utilize a variety of communication media (e.g., everything from the Internet, to signs, to books and brochures) to disseminate information about Montana's wildlife and the Watchable Wildlife Program.
- GOAL 4:** Utilize volunteers as an integral component of the program.

### **Performance Measures:**

1. Public knowledge about Montana's wildlife and its habitat.
2. Public knowledge about the Watchable Wildlife Program.
3. Visitation at Watchable Wildlife sites, events, and activities.
3. Number of volunteers.
4. Sales of Watchable Wildlife products.
5. Public attitudes about the quality of Watchable Wildlife materials and programs.
6. Quantity and quality of cooperative ventures.



## **APPENDIX M:**

### **Helena Administrative Team Decision-Making Model**





## PROGRAMMATIC DECISION-MAKING MODEL FWP HELENA STAFF

### Helena Administrative Team Role in Programmatic Decision-making

Decisions that affect the department are made at several levels. At the highest level, FWP's mandate is defined by the Montana Constitution; the Legislature through statutes; and, by the Governor's Office through Executive Orders and policies. The Commission and/or Director are responsible for decisions that clarify the agency mission and define FWP's Vision and Goals. The Helena Administrative Team (HAT) is responsible for decisions that define department policies and programs. Regional staff are responsible for decisions related to implementation of those policies and programs.

The purpose of this programmatic decision-making model is to outline the role of the HAT relative to the role of other decision-makers who affect FWP, and to describe the process by which the members of the HAT will make decisions as a team.

Division Administrators, working together as the HAT, make recommendations regarding legislation, mission, vision and goals and higher level policies. Within the limits of the agency mandate, mission, vision and goals, the administrators, individually and collectively, also make decisions through identification of priorities and emphasis areas; development of programmatic documents that include the definition of program outcomes, program policies and standards, a framework for program evaluations and a framework for program amendments; supervision of the development of 6-year planning documents; and, the allocation of resources to efficiently and effectively accomplish department priorities.

Programmatic decisions are hierarchical. Decisions at the higher level must be made before issues subordinate to those decisions can be addressed. Whether making recommendations, making the decisions or delegating responsibilities, the HAT has some responsibilities related to each of the following decision-making levels.

Level 1 Decisions define, within the limits of the department's mandate, the scope of FWP's mission and the scope of FWP programs designed to achieve the mission. These decisions provide answers to the following kinds of questions: What are FWP's priorities? To what extent are potential new initiatives consistent with FWP's mission and mandate? What is the relative priority of existing programs versus new initiatives? What is the role of FWP versus other agencies and organizations in achieving department priorities? What should be the scope of a program? What are the appropriate focus and framework? What policies and sideboards should guide programs?

Level 1 decisions are made by the Director, typically in consultation with the HAT.

Level 2 Decisions define program direction and allocate resources to accomplish programs. These decisions provide answers to the following kinds of questions: What are the relevant programmatic issues? What are the desired outcomes of the program? How do desired

outcomes relate to public expectations? What are the phases of the program over its lifetime? What are the program standards? What are the appropriate roles of the various FWP work units? How should the needs of multiple program be met within the current workload? What staffing and funding are required to accomplish the purpose of the program? How will program evaluation be accomplished?

Level 2 decisions are made by the HAT, typically in consultation with other appropriate divisional work units and regions. Some level decisions may be made directly while others are delegated to staff or teams. It is the role of the HAT to ensure that programs are developed within the bounds established through statute, Executive Order and policy.

Level 3 Decisions guide program implementation. These decisions provide answers to the following kinds of questions: How should a new initiative or program element be implemented? How should FWP coordinate compliance with the requirements of program funding sources and compliance with MEPA? What additional information might be required? To what extent might that information be acquired through research vs. an adaptive management strategy? What strategies might be appropriate to ensure internal acceptance of the program? How should we involve potential federal, local government and private sector partners?

Level 3 decisions are made by the regions, after consultation with affected divisions, as appropriate. It is the role of the regions to ensure that programs are implemented within the standards and guidelines established in law and department and commission rule and policy.

## **HAT Decision-making Process**

The HAT will use the process outlined below to make the programmatic decisions and recommendations for which it is responsible:

1. The HAT will meet on a regular basis to identify programmatic issues that it must address. When an issue is identified, the HAT in consultation with the Director, as appropriate, will determine the final decision-maker and decision-making process, and develop a strategy or action plan (ie., time frames, who needs to be involved, lead person, side boards, desired information) to bring the issue to conclusion or a decision.
2. Within the HAT, the individual or division who has the lead on a decision that affects other divisions is responsible for soliciting input from those who are affected by the decision (division administrators and regional supervisors).
3. Each administrator will be responsible for circulating on a regular basis a list of pending decisions/issues so that other administrators and supervisors may review and determine whether they want to/should be involved.
4. The decision-maker(s) will consider all perspectives and issues related to a decision,

and be prepared to report the rationale (both pluses and minuses) for the decision. The decision and rationale must be communicated to others affected by the decision.

5. Decisions delegated to the HAT will be made by consensus, if possible. If consensus is not possible, the HAT will attempt to make decisions that all members are willing to support. If that level of agreement is not possible, decisions will be made according to the preference of the majority. If the minority believes that the issue is important, the minority may so inform the HAT and then elevate the decision made by the majority to a higher authority for review of the majority and minority reports.
6. 6-month evaluation: The HAT will capture basic information about the number and types of decisions made by the team. In addition, the team will either use informal or formal methods to evaluate how decision making worked. The evaluation will include a report back to the management team.





**APPENDIX N:**

**Miscellaneous Policies**



## CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

### Draft Policy

The mission of the Montana State Parks Cultural Program is to conserve archeological resources, cultural landscapes, historic and prehistoric structures, museum objects and ethnographic resources.

The following is a list of Montana Cultural State Parks:

Anaconda Smelter Stack	Granite
Bannack	Lewis & Clark Caverns
Beaverhead Rock	Madison Buffalo Jump
Chief Plenty Coups	Makoshika
Chief Joseph Battleground	Missouri Headwaters
Clark's Lookout	Parker Homestead
Council Grove	Pictograph Caves
Elkhorn	Rosebud Battlefield
Fort Owen	Ulm Pishkun
Giant Springs	

#### Research

Research to support planning and legal compliance will precede all final decisions about the preservation or treatment of cultural resources or about park development or operational activities that might affect cultural resources. Cultural research needs will be identified in cultural parks management plans.

#### Planning

Overall direction for the identification, evaluation, protection, treatment and use of cultural resources will be provided in the basic planning document for each cultural park. Each cultural park manager will prepare and periodically update a cultural resource component of the park's management plan.

#### General Management

Every effort will be made to ensure that routine park operations do not intrude unnecessarily on cultural landscapes or traditions and beliefs by introducing visible, audible, or atmospheric elements out of character with the historic landscape. Trash disposal, storage of materials, driving and parking of vehicles and other operational activities within the park's historic zone will be conducted out of public view to the maximum extent possible. Operation practices that are compatible and consistent with the park theme that enhance interpretative value will be identified in cultural parks managements plans. Operation practices that are incompatible will also be defined in management plans.

Under the auspices of National Park Services Cultural Resource Management Guideline NPS-28, Montana State Parks Cultural Program provides for preservation of cultural properties listed on the National Register. The following State Parks are listed as shown on the National Register of Historic Places:

Anaconda Copper Mining Company Smoke Stack

Bannack Historic District  
Beaverhead Rock - Lewis & Clark Expedition  
Battle of Rosebud Site  
Chief Joseph Battleground of the Bear's Paw\* (LANDMARK)  
Chief Plenty Coups Memorial  
Clark's Lookout  
Fraternity Hall (Elkhorn)  
Fort Owen  
Great Falls Portage (LANDMARK)\_  
Madison Buffalo Jump State Monument  
Miners' Union Hall (Granite)  
Pictograph Cave  
Superintendent's House (Weir House - Granite)  
Three Forks on the Missouri River (LANDMARK)  
Ulm Pishkun

\*Managed by National Park Service

The park sites listed below have cultural properties that are being considered for nomination to the Register:

Council Grove  
Lewis & Clark Caverns  
Makoshika  
Parker Homestead



**Montana Department  
of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Ref: PG0871.95  
December 4, 1995

TO: Regional Supervisors

FROM: Pat Graham

*Pat*

SUBJECT: Final Division Safety Policy - Personal Protective  
Equipment (PPE)

Attached is the final version of the Parks Division Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy. The policy is effective immediately and a copy should be provided to all current and future Parks employees.

To help facilitate implementation of the PPE policy, ongoing safety training will be provided to all appropriate Parks personnel through the Safety Training for Parks Personnel Program.

Please direct questions and comments on the PPE Policy to Mary Ellen McDonald or Arnie Olsen in the Helena office.

Thank you for your continued support of this important program.

Attachment

c: Regional Park Managers  
Doug Denler  
Division Administrators  
Regional Maintenance Supervisors *R3*

## PARKS DIVISION PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT POLICY

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION DESCRIBES WHEN PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) MUST BE WORN BY PARKS DIVISION EMPLOYEES.

Mandatory personal protective equipment (PPE) is available to all Division employees. The Division has made an effort to select PPE that is acceptable for comfort, utility and style. It is the employee's responsibility to report problems such as improper fit or malfunction of personal protective equipment assigned to him/her to his/her supervisor.

It is the responsibility of both an employee and the supervisor to determine if the employee is working in a potentially unsafe condition and which item of PPE is needed for protection. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to provide safety training to employees regarding the use of PPE. In the absence of the supervisor or when in doubt, each employee is required to wear PPE when working in potentially unsafe conditions.

Listed below in bold print and underlined are items of PPE followed by some examples of potentially unsafe conditions that may occur when performing the activities listed. NOTE: This is not an all inclusive list but provided to best represent types of activities where unsafe condition may occur.

### HARD HATS - all Parks personnel when -

• engaged in work involving the possibility of injury to the head as a result of falling, flying, and stationary objects, operating vehicular equipment when no cab, cage or roll over protection is present. Some examples of when hard hats may be necessary are:

- entering construction zones and/or when working in areas where overhead hazards may be present, i.e. tree trimming, overhead construction, roofing, ladder work.
- brush cutting, chain saw use, chipping
- performing work in constricted areas, such as confined spaces or trenches

### FACE AND EYE PROTECTION - all Parks personnel when -

• engaged in activities when possibilities of injuries to the face and eyes could result from particles being blown or propelled into the eyes, splashes of corrosives and liquid chemicals, intense

light conditions, contaminated areas where bloodborne pathogens or hantavirus may be present. Some examples of when face and eye protection may be necessary are:

- goggles, glasses or face shields - when chainsawing, blowing particles with compressed air, mowing, weedeating, chipping, brush clearing, nailing, high speed drilling, table saw work, grinding, chiseling, punching, striking objects
- goggles - cleaning latrines, trash handling, applying first aid, mixing or handling chemicals and corrosives
- hood or glasses with approved lenses - when welding, cutting brazing
- pocket mask/mouth to mouth barrier - when applying CPR

#### HEARING PROTECTION - all Parks personnel when -

• engaged in work generating over 85 decibels of noise that involves repetitive, piercing, or sustained decibel levels and/or frequencies that could result in hearing loss. Some examples of when hearing protection may be necessary:

- frequent and sustained operation of engines, motors or equipment
- short term operation of equipment

Note: Wear protective hearing equipment designed for decibels and duration of exposure. Find out how many decibels the equipment you are considering can block out, subtract this number from the decibel level of the work area. This tells how many dBs of exposure when wearing hearing protection.

Examples of decibels generated by different types of sounds:

- office noise.....40 dBs
- home environments.....50 dBs
- traffic noise.....75 dBs
- office equipment.....80 dBs
- typical factory floors.....85 dBs
- backhoe operation, begins at.....90 dBs
- woodworking tools.....100 dBs
- car/truck horns.....120 dBs
- a gunshot blast.....140 dBs

#### RESPIRATORY - all Parks personnel when -

• working in conditions where noxious, toxic and viral substances and/or excessive dust, mists and fumes may be inhaled or as required by Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). Some examples of when respirators may be necessary are:

- Airborne Particles - some disposable respirators, half-mask respirators, full-face respirators, and supplies-air



respirators - wear when tiny airborne particles of dust, mists, viruses or fumes are present, such as when milling, sanding, crushing, grinding, sawing, sweeping, welding, near furnaces and other high heat operations, spraying, cleaning or working in rodent infested buildings, mixing and applying herbicides, insecticides, rodenticides, hazardous chemical spills

- Invisible Contaminants - half-mask respirators, full-face respirators, supplied-air respirators - wear when harmful gases or vapors are present, such as confined spaces, high heat operations, parts cleaning, painting and when near cleaning and mixing operations
- Oxygen Deficiency - supplied-air respirator - wear when there is a lack of oxygen, such as enclosed areas including tanks, vaults, pipelines, trenches and manholes.
- Temperature Extremes - supplied-air respirator - wear when in high heat operations, near furnaces

#### LEG PROTECTION - all Parks employees when -

• engaged in work activities where there is a possibility of injury to the legs from running blades, kneeling for long periods of time, and flying and piercing objects. Some examples of when leg protection may be necessary are:

- during chainsaw use, brush cutting, mowing, weedeating
- roofing and other carpentry work when kneeling occurs for long periods of time
- welding

#### BODY PROTECTION -all Parks employees when -

• engaged in work where there is a possibility of bodily injury or coming into contact with contaminated materials, toxic chemicals, sparks, or during maintenance and patrol operations around or in water performing maintenance work or while operating water craft. Some examples of when body protection may be necessary are:

- rubber apron - cleaning latrines, trash handling, mixing chemicals
- hantavirus protective suit - rodent infested buildings
- leather apron - welding, grinding, cutting with torch, brazing
- Coast Guard approved personal floatation device (PFD) - on boat and ice
- high visibility vests - mowing on road shoulders, working in or near parking lots, roadways

#### FOOT PROTECTION - all Parks personnel when -

• engaged in activities when possibilities of injuries to the feet could result from falling objects, working around heavy equipment



and most general maintenance activities. Note: Foot apparel that covers, protects and supports the foot with the exception of river rangers and lifeguards, must be worn. Some examples of when foot protection may be necessary:

- weedeating, mowing, trimming, brush cutting, chain saw use
- working in construction zones
- vehicle and machinery repair

HAND PROTECTION - all Parks employees when -

• engaged in operations when handling solvents, herbicides, toxins, caustics, acids, handling equipment or materials that could puncture or cut into the skin and coming into contact with biological contaminants or rodent infestation. Some examples of when hand protection may be necessary are:

- rubber or surgical gloves - cleaning latrines, trash handling, applying first aid and/or CPR, handling game, working in rodent infested areas
- rubber gauntlet gloves - mixing and handling chemicals
- leather gloves - fencing, chain saw operation, brush clearing, tree trimming, welding, paint chipping, weed pulling, loading and unloading

The following list is an example of optional personal protective equipment that may be provided at the discretion of supervisors:

- back braces
- wrist braces
- computer chairs
- harnesses
- pepper spray (refer to the O.C. Spray policy)
- snake chaps
- bite sticks
- snare loops
- sun protection

November, 1995



# **Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



TITLE: DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS  
FILMING GUIDELINES

EFFECTIVE DATE: Draft July 1, 1994

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Director

Purpose: The purpose of these guidelines are to establish and implement consistent policies and procedures in dealing with requests to use Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) properties for filming purposes. This policy recognizes the role that the film industry has in Montana's economy and the important resources that are protected on department lands. This policy will guide the use of those resources in regards to commercial filming on department lands.

Film Permit: All filming done on Department lands, either still or motion, intended for public viewing must follow these guidelines and obtain a filming permit. All permits issued for filming will incorporate the provisions of this policy.

All photography to be used in advertisements of products or services requires a permit. Advertisements must not imply endorsement by the department or State of Montana.

Written permission to conduct a filming activity must be obtained in advance from the director of the Department on the permit application used for this purpose. The permit application is attached to this policy.

Persons applying for a filming permit shall provide the Department at the time of application with either a script of the production or a written description in enough detail so that the Department can determine if it is in the best interest of the Department and the State to allow the activity. Either of these descriptions must explicitly describe and document any use of wild or domestic animals, fire or explosives, chemicals, facility modification or construction or any off road vehicle activity.

The Department will notify the Montana Film Office Director at Department of Commerce when the Department receives an inquiry or application for a film permit.

All filming done on Department lands shall have a filming permit except:

- Still photography by individuals for personal non commercial use, using hand-held equipment, tripods, flashbulbs and/or strobe

lights, which does not involve the use of products, models, sets, props, lights or similar equipment.

- Photographers and news crews reporting events for the news media are not required to have a permit so long as the film is used solely for news media, if the film product is to be used for other commercial purposes this policy shall apply. News events include events such as an appearance by a public figure, emergencies, commemorative event, non-recurring natural phenomenon.

-These guidelines do not apply to Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks filming endeavors.

All filming must be conducted pursuant to applicable rules and regulations governing activities conducted on Department lands and in accordance with these guidelines.

Cooperative Agreements: Filming productions involving the state through a cooperative agreement, memorandum of understanding or similar legal documentation shall be authorized only with the concurrence of the regional supervisor. In addition, the following three criteria must be applied in such cases:

1. The subject matter of the film must be a topic or theme which the state would have the authority to portray visually with its own funds and staff (if staff and funds were available).
2. The state must have sufficient funds and personnel available to protect the resource while cooperating effectively with the film company.
3. The film must involve the interpretation of department lands, resources, programs or activities.
4. The film will portray factual, educational or interpretive information and shall not be of a fictitious nature.

Filming Permit Required: The prescribed permit form for authorizing filming activities is attached to this document. The Permit will not be valid until signed by all parties involved. The initial application for filming will be first reviewed by the Region.

Minimum Notice: The Department recognizes the short time frames that many filming companies operate under and the Department will as practical, strive to accommodate the deadlines of the permittee. However, the Department requires no less than 5 business days from the time a completed permit application and application fee are received before it can issue a filming permit. This time frame may be increased if the nature of the filming request requires environmental and cultural clearances. These guidelines do not override or supersede the need to comply with the Montana Environmental Policy Act.



Fees: Each permit applicant shall pay a \$50 non-refundable fee to the Department to consider its filming request. This fee is to be submitted with a completed filming permit.

Upon approval of the filming permit and prior to the first day of filming the permittee is required to pay \$250 per day for a filming crew size of 1 to 5 persons, \$500 per day fee for a 6 to 10 person crew, and \$1,500 per day for a crew larger than 10 persons. This is a base use fee and does not include such items as insurance coverage, bonding, or overtime payments.

Bond and Damage Provisions: A Bond, Certificate of Deposit, certified check, letter of credit or other acceptable means of security in the amount determined by the Department shall be required to be held by the Department prior to commencement of any permit.

At its sole expense, Permittee shall repair and replace any damaged structures or areas occupied or used by during the filming, if damage is caused by permittee, within ten (10) days of the date damage is sustained. If this does not occur the Department may execute the bond provisions as it deems necessary.

The Department may waive the bond requirement only if it anticipates no damage to the resource and determines that the activities permitted will not require clean-up or restoration. A bond amount will be required in amounts equal to the estimated cost to the state of clean-up or restoration that would be required if the permittee fails to perform such a duty. The state retains the right to contract such services. After the service is completed, the Manager will assess the charge, deduct it from the bond and return the balance, if any, to the permittee. If irreparable damage should occur, the entire bond amount may be assessed and charged against the bond. The state will also have the option to pursue any and all legal recourse for reasonable compensation, if the bond is insufficient to pay the cost of clean-up or restoration, or if irreparable damage occurs.

Resource Damage: No permit shall be issued for any activity which will irreparably harm, damage or otherwise degrade any natural, historic, cultural or resource.

Insurance: In order to accomplish the indemnification required for but without limiting the indemnification, the permittee shall secure and maintain throughout the term of the permit the following types of insurance issued by companies acceptable to the department with the limits shown below. As a condition precedent to permittee's obligations hereunder, permittee, at his own expense, shall mail or present to the department, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620 for approval, certificates or policies of insurance as evidence that the following types and amounts of insurance are in effect during the entire term of this agreement:

1. Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance - to include coverage for owned, hired and non-owned vehicles with combined

single limits for bodily injury and property damage of not less the \$1,000,000.

2. Comprehensive General Liability - to include premise operations and contractual liability coverage with combined single limits of \$1,000,000.

3. Extended Fire Insurance - adequate to cover full cash value of Permittee's personal property, improvements and betterment located on leased premises.

4. Workers' Compensation - All Workers' Compensation Insurance liabilities as delineated by Montana State Law.

All insurance policies except for the Workers' Compensation Insurance and Personal Automobile shall contain additional endorsements naming the State of Montana, its employees, agents, volunteers and officers as additional named insured with respect to liabilities arising out of the use permitted hereunder.

Prior to use of Department lands, permittee shall provide certified copies of all policies and endorsements and a photocopy of automobile coverage to the Department evidencing the insurance coverage above required. Certificates shall provide that such insurance shall not be terminated or expired without thirty (30) days written notice to the Department.

All policies required above are to be primary and non-contributing with any insurance or self-insurance programs carried or administered by the State.

Permittee shall require the carriers of the coverage to waive all rights of subrogation against the Department, its officers, volunteers, employees, contractors and subcontractors.

State Supervision: Filming permitted shall be supervised by a state employee to assure full compliance with all of the terms and conditions of the permit. In the case of a project involving substantial numbers of persons and equipment, supervision will be on-the-spot and continuous.

Overtime Payments: If the Department determines that the filming activities place overtime burdens on the Department, the Department may require payment for the cost of all overtime services provided. These payments shall be in addition to the permit fee and bonding requirements.

USE OF ANIMALS: The use of domestic/tame animals may be permitted if humane treatment is accorded the animals at all times. In no case may animals be used which could effect, damage or threaten resident wildlife populations. The Department may require certification of disease free status, or sterility of domestic animals. No wildlife or exotic species may be used for filming purposes.

Disruption of Visitor Activities: Filming activities may not unduly conflict with visitors uses or experiences on Department lands. The public shall be informed of any unusual or long term closure or delay expected due to the filming activity. If user revenues are expected to decline due to the permit the permit fee shall be adjusted to reflect those revenue losses.

Denial of Permit: The Department may deny the use of Department lands for use in filming for good and sound reasoning specifically:

1. Resource Damage - Permit shall be denied if damage to a resource may result. Alternatively, in the discretion of the department conditions may be attached to the permit if needed to protect wildlife, natural, historical, archeological and cultural resources.

2. Supervisory Requirements - If the Department determines that the requirement for supervision will place unreasonable burdens on the supervisory capacity of Department staff, he or she may deny the permit on those grounds. This denial may be made irrespective of the prospective film company's willingness to pay the overtime expenses associated with such supervision. Such denial must be cleared with the affected regional supervisor and division administrator.

3. Disruption of Visitor Activities - If the Department determines that the proposed filming would conflict unduly with the public's normal use of Department lands, the request shall be negotiated to alleviate that impact or, if that is not possible, the request shall be denied. In either case, the affected regional supervisor and division administrator are the final decision authority.

4. Closed Areas - Permits may not allow activities or access to areas not generally accessible to the general public, unless specific written approval is received from the Department.

Termination of Permit: In each filming permit the Department reserves the right to terminate the agreement for by thirty (30) days written notice to the permittee. Termination shall be for good cause and shall not be arbitrary or unreasonable.

The agreement may be terminated on two (2) days notice if permittee is on default in fee or any other agreement provision for two days or three times within 12 consecutive months.

The permit may be revoked in the discretion of the Department without notice if damage to resources or facilities is threatened, notwithstanding any other term or condition of the permit to the contrary.

State Equipment: State equipment may not be loaned or rented to a film company, or diverted from its normal use.

Off-duty Employees Working For Filming Company: Employees may work, off duty, for a film company only if they do not perform or appear to be performing duties within the scope of their state



employment, or if during the course of their state employment they supervise, regulate or oversee the filming permittee.

State Logo: Whenever a film company wishes to use the Parks Division logo or Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks symbol, permission of the parks administrator and department director is required. This shall not be applied so narrowly that there will be a prohibition of incidental filming of the symbol, except where that filming is for advertising, promotional or commercial purposes. Incidental filming includes casual appearance of the logo/symbol, as on the shoulder patch of a uniformed employee, a state vehicle or an entrance or similar sign. Arrangements for other than incidental use of the symbol must be approved by the regional supervisor and Division administrator.

Permit Assignment: Filming permits issued by the Department are non-transferable and non-assignable; any attempted transfer or assignment of an issued permit shall cause immediate termination of that permit.

Production Copy: Each permit shall contain a clause which requires the permittee to provide the Department with one complimentary copy of the completed work. If the completed work is greater than 100 pages or 1 hour of finished filming time, depending on the medium, it shall be within the Department's discretion to only require copies of the segments filmed in or relating to the Department property.

Effective Date: This policy shall become effective immediately upon its approval by the Department Director. Any permits which are being negotiated, renewed, amended or updated at the time of the effective date or thereafter are subject to the provisions of this policy.



FILMING PERMIT  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

1. The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, hereinafter referred to as the "DEPARTMENT", hereby permits \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ hereinafter referred to as the "PERMITTEE", to engage in the business and/or activity of filming/still photography at \_\_\_\_\_ and agrees to abide by the provisions of the Department Filming Guidelines.

2. TERM: The term of this agreement is from \_\_\_\_\_ 199\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ 199\_\_.

3. USE AREA: Area designated by regional supervisor. See Paragraph 15, "Special Terms".

4. FEES: PERMITTEE agrees to pay as the daily Park Use Fee \_\_\_\_\_ per day, without deduction, set off, prior notice or demand. This fee is payable on or before the first and each day of use.

LATE PAYMENT: PERMITTEE acknowledges that late payment of fee by PERMITTEE to DEPARTMENT will cause DEPARTMENT to incur costs not contemplated by this Permit, the exact amount of such costs being extremely difficult and impracticable to fix. Such costs include, without limitation, processing, accounting, and interest charges. Therefore, if any payment due from PERMITTEE is not received when due, PERMITTEE shall pay to DEPARTMENT an additional sum of \$30.00 per day as administrative processing charge. The parties agree that this late charge represents a fair and reasonable estimate of the costs that the DEPARTMENT will incur by reason of late payment by the PERMITTEE. Acceptance of any late charge will not constitute a waiver of PERMITTEE's default with respect to the overdue amount or prevent DEPARTMENT from exercising any of the other rights and remedies available to the DEPARTMENT.

All payments shall be made to the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620.

5. INSURANCE: (a) In order to accomplish the indemnification herein provided for but without limiting the indemnification, the PERMITTEE shall secure and maintain throughout the term of the permit the following types of insurance issued by companies acceptable to the

DEPARTMENT with the limits shown below. As a condition precedent to PERMITTEE's obligations hereunder, PERMITTEE, at his own expense, shall mail or present to the DEPARTMENT, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620 for approval, certificates or policies of insurance as evidence that the following types and amounts of insurance are in effect during the entire term of this agreement:

1. Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance - to include coverage for owned, hired and non-owned vehicles with combined single limits for bodily injury and property damage of not less than \$1,000,000.
2. Comprehensive General Liability - to include premise operations and contractual liability coverage with combined single limits of \$1,000,000.
3. Extended Fire Insurance - adequate to cover full cash value of PERMITTEE's personal property, improvements and betterments located on leased premises.
4. Workers' Compensation - All Workers' Compensation Insurance liabilities as delineated by Montana State Law.

(b) All policies, with respect to the insurance coverage above required, except for the Workers' Compensation Insurance, and Personal Automobile shall contain additional endorsements naming the State of Montana, its employees, agents, volunteers and officers as additional named insured with respect to liabilities arising out of the use permitted hereunder.

(c) PERMITTEE prior to use of the department land shall provide certified copies of all policies and endorsements and a photocopy of personal automobile coverage to the DEPARTMENT evidencing the insurance coverage above required prior to the commencement of performance of services hereunder, which certificates shall provide that such insurance shall not be terminated or expired without thirty (30) days written notice to the DEPARTMENT.

(d) All policies required above are to be primary and non-contributing with any insurance or self-insurance programs carried or administered by the State.

(e) PERMITTEE shall require the carriers of the coverages to waive all rights of subrogation against the DEPARTMENT, its officers, volunteers, employees, contractors and subcontractors.

6. BOND and DAMAGE PROVISIONS: At its sole expense, PERMITTEE shall repair and replace any damaged structures or areas occupied or used by PERMITTEE, if said damage is caused by PERMITTEE, within thirty (30) days of the date damage is sustained. A Bond, Certificate of Deposit, certified check, letter of credit or other acceptable means of security in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is required to be held by the DEPARTMENT prior to commencement of this permit. Provision will be made so that the security is drawable by the Department.
7. CREDIT: Credit will \_\_\_\_\_; will not \_\_\_\_\_ be given to the DEPARTMENT through the use of an appropriate title or announcement.
8. HOLD HARMLESS: The PERMITTEE agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the DEPARTMENT and its authorized agents, officers, volunteers and employees against any and all claims arising from PERMITTEE's acts or omissions and for any costs or expenses incurred by the DEPARTMENT, or PERMITTEE on account of any claim therefore. In order to accomplish the indemnification herein provided for, but without limiting the indemnification, the permittee shall secure and maintain throughout the term of the contract the above types of insurance with limits as shown.
9. ASSIGNMENT PROHIBITED: PERMITTEE shall not transfer or assign this agreement to any other person or entity, voluntarily or involuntarily, and no such transfer shall be binding upon the DEPARTMENT. Violation of this provision will result in automatic termination of this permit.
10. TERMINATION: (a) DEPARTMENT reserves the right to terminate this agreement on ten (10) days written notice to the PERMITTEE. The termination shall be for good cause and shall not be arbitrary or unreasonable.
- (b) The agreement may be terminated on two (2) days notice if PERMITTEE is more than two days late in fee payment.
- (c) This permit is revocable and may be revoked in the discretion of the Regional Supervisor or his designee upon 24 hours notice, or without notice if damage to resources or facilities is threatened, notwithstanding any other term or condition of this permit to the contrary.
11. ATTORNEY'S FEES - COLLECTIONS AGENCY FEES: In the event suit is instituted to collect any fees and collection is placed with an attorney, the PERMITTEE shall pay all attorney's fees including necessary court costs and costs for all appeals. If the fees due are placed with a collection agency instead of an attorney, PERMITTEE shall



pay for collection agency fees according to the collection agency's fee schedule. In the event suit is instituted for breach of any other terms of this agreement, the PERMITTEE shall pay all attorney's fees including necessary court costs for all appeals.

12. CONDUCT OF EMPLOYEES: PERMITTEE shall be responsible for the conduct of its employees on the entire property, without regard to whether the presence of the employee on the property is related to his status as employee of PERMITTEE.

13. CONFORMANCE WITH LAW: PERMITTEE agrees to abide by all pertinent laws, rules, and regulations of the State of Montana, the DEPARTMENT, applicable county regulations, or any other duly constituted public authority having jurisdiction (this includes fire protection). PERMITTEE agrees and understands that the commission of any illegal or unlawful act on the premises or any other portion of the property shall constitute a default on PERMITTEE's part and shall be cause of DEPARTMENT to serve Notice of Termination as provided in section 10 of this permit.

PERMITTEE agrees to abide by all provisions of the DEPARTMENT Filming Guidelines.

14. SPECIAL TERMS: PERMITTEE must be in constant contact with the Regional Supervisor or his designee. Any deviation in plans are subject to approval by the Regional Supervisor. Premises are to be left in original status as found (i.e., condition before use). Security services, if necessary, are the sole responsibility of the PERMITTEE with the approval of the Regional Supervisor.

15. NO INTEREST OR ESTATE: PERMITTEE agrees that it does not have and shall not claim at any time any interest or estate of any kind or extent whatsoever in the use area on the property, by virtue of his agreement or its occupancy or use hereunder.

16. NOTICE: Any notice, demand, request, consent, approval or communication that either party desires or is required to give to the other party, shall be in writing and either served personally or sent by prepaid, first-class mail. Any such notice, demand, request, consent, approval or communication that either party desires or is required to give to the other party at the following addresses:  
DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_.

PERMITTEE \_\_\_\_\_.



Either party may change its address by notifying the other party of its change of address.

OTHER PROVISIONS

17. No personal gratuity of any nature whatsoever will be offered to any employee of the state in connection with the exercise of the privilege granted.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS

18. Utmost care will be exercised to see that no natural, historical or cultural features will be damaged, injured or altered. No activity may take place which would adversely effect any of the resources of the property.

19. No vehicles will be driven off of established, graveled and maintained road or roadways.

20. OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_  
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permittee  
  
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address  
  
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local telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Director  
  
1420 East Sixth Ave.  
Helena, Mt. 59620  
(406) 444-3750



*TOM*  
NOT FINAL

## Issue Paper

### Registration of Commercial Users of FASs (and other FWP managed properties)

ARM Rule 12.8.211 requires all commercial users to secure permission from the Director for the long-term use of Department owned or managed lands.

At the present time FWP does not register or charge commercial users of Department lands a fee of any type, except at Parks, Intake FAS, and for agricultural permits. It is known and acknowledged that numerous businesses depend upon FASs and other FWP properties as a part of their commercial for-profit efforts each year.

Even though the ARM Rule has been on the books for some years now, the registration of commercial users has not been done in the past. The full extent of the commercial use that occurs on the FASs and other Department lands is unknown at this point.

### Who Would Be Affected by a Commercial Use Registration?

Commercial users are those organizations or businesses that utilize FWP properties as a part of their businesses. The effected businesses include fishing outfitters/guides, rafting companies, car shuttle companies, and bird watching/eco-tour organizations. There could ultimately be 500-600 commercial uses of FASs in Montana.

### Why Register Commercial Users?

At the present time the full extent of the commercial use occurring on Department managed lands is unknown. The first step in gathering this information will involve a registration process for all commercial users. Much like the "sign in" of hunters required by a rancher enrolled in the Block Management program, the registration process will provide the information necessary to make future decisions regarding the commercial use of Department lands.

*Why this information is needed:*

1. To comply with the existing law.
2. To learn who is conducting commercial activities and what they are doing.
3. To determine how many people these commercial users serve.
4. To determine if the existing commercial use is compatible with the intended land use.
5. To determine if there are conflicts between user groups, such as commercial users, private users, neighbors, etc.
6. To provide a database on which to base future management decisions, such as a possible commercial use or concession fee, or limit certain activities at certain sites.

## Options

The following options are available:

1. No action - amend ARM Rule 12.8.211.

\*2. Implement a commercial user registration program, charging each commercial user a nominal registration fee (\$10) to cover the administrative costs of the registration process.

3. Implement a commercial user registration program, but with no registration fee. The costs to complete the registration efforts would have to be absorbed by the existing FAS/license account budgets. Registration costs are estimated to be \$5,000-\$10,000.

*\* - preferred alternative*

## Discussion

Implementing a registration process for all commercial users of FASs during the 1998 season would:

- a.) satisfy the exiting law.
- b.) provide FWP with an accurate, up-to-date list of the commercial users.
- c.) provide valuable information concerning what types of commercial use is occurring.
- d.) allow FWP to survey the commercial users concerning future commercial use issues.

One of the options listed above (Option 2) involves charging all commercial users a nominal registration fee (say \$10), which would be utilized to off-set the administrative costs associated with the registration process. This funding would be used for printing, mailings, word processing, data entry, and other costs directly related to the registration process.

A meeting was held at the Helena Headquarters on December 16, 1997, with representatives of the affected businesses. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the commercial fee issue and the possibility of a registration process. Attendees included members of FOAM, a car shuttle operator, MOGA, and an independent fishing outfitter. Overall, the attendees were in agreement that a registration system for commercial users would provide valuable information on which to base future fee decisions.

No commercial use fee is being considered or recommended to the Commission, affected commercial users, or the public at this time. It is important to simply register all commercial users during the first season. With the registration and commercial use survey data in-hand at the end of the 1998 season, a better view of the actual scope and extent of the commercial use activities will be available for decision making.



How to find and register commercial users:

*P.O.A.*

1. Begin with the list of licensed outfitters from MOGA. Per Mat Rude, the new 1998 listing will be out in March.
2. Travel Montana will be contacted and asked to provide information/listings of any known commercial users that they may have. Specifically, the white water rafting companies that may utilize the Travel Montana organization for a portion of their promotional efforts. summer.
3. Contact the USFS and NPS to request information on existing commercial users of their sites. Any lists obtained from these Federal organizations would then be compared to information we would have from the historical Regional data. Any potential commercial users of FWP managed sites that have been overlooked will then be contacted.
4. Have each Regional Park Managers list, write down, and recall any commercial users that they are aware of from past years. This would also include caretakers and maintenance personnel who are in the field and know the commercial operators using the sites.
5. We will have an informational flyer/registration form that will be handed-out in the field when an unregistered commercial user is contacted. These users would be given an information packet as well as a self addressed return mail card to allow them to easily contact FWP for registration. These 'forms' would be cared by Parks and Enforcement personnel. These would also be available at each Regional office for any "walk-ins" as knowledge of the registration process gets out to the affected public.
6. A series of general press releases through our Con Ed Division. This may include notices in the newspapers of some of the larger cities around the state.- Great Falls, Missoula, Billings, Bozeman, Miles City, Kalispell, etc.
7. Word of mouth and peer pressure involving those commercial users who *have* registered. If there is interest, this may involve asking those fishing outfitters who have registered to distribute the informational flyers/registration forms to other commercial users they encounter in the field. Additionally, we would provide a means for those commercial users who have registered to identify and provide information directly to FWP concerning those commercial users who have not.
8. Post a sign at each FAS notifying commercial users of the registration process and how they can obtain additional information and a registration package.
9. Provide the informational flyers/ registration forms to; sporting good stores, fly shops, boat dealers, marinas, and boat rental operations along with the notification poster.
10. Provide information to the following groups or organization for inclusion in their newsletters in an attempt to reach potential commercial users:

Trout Unlimited	Audubon Society
Pheasants Forever	Wildlife Federation
Ducks Unlimited	
RMEF	
11. Contact the Chamber of Commerce in cities to ask of potential commercial users in the area that can be contacted directly by FWP again with posters and registration packets.

12.8.209 RESTRICTED AREAS & NIGHT CLOSURES (1) No person may enter upon any portion of any area that is posted as restricted to public passage.

(2) Designated recreation areas as posted will be closed nightly, except for emergency ingress and egress.

(3) Checkout time for campers using fee areas is 4:00 p.m. the following day unless otherwise posted.

(4) Designated recreation areas where camping is not allowed are open from sunrise to sundown unless otherwise posted. (History: Secs. 23-1-106, 87-1-303 MCA; IMP, Sec. 23-1-102 MCA; Eff. 12/31/72; AMD, Eff. 6/5/76; AMD, 1979 MAR p. 318, Eff. 3/30/79; AMD, 1983 MAR p. 655, Eff. 6/17/83; AMD, 1988 MAR p. 498, Eff. 3/11/88.)

12.8.210 SANITATION AND LITTER WASTE DISPOSAL (1) No person may dump dead fish or animals or parts thereof, human excrement, refuse, rubbish, or wash water (except in receptacles provided for this purpose) nor pollute or litter in any other manner a public recreational area. Sewage wastes from self-contained trailers, campers, or other portable toilets shall be disposed of only in posted sanitary trailer dump stations. Wash water may be disposed of in sealed vault latrines.

(2) No household or commercial garbage or trash brought in as such from other property shall be disposed of in any designated public recreation area.

(3) The use of glass bottles and containers is not permitted at swimming beaches, or areas or portions of areas posted to exclude them.

(4) In addition to any other penalty provided for violation, the participants may be expelled from the area. (History: Secs. 23-1-106, 87-1-303 MCA; IMP, Sec. 23-1-102, 87-1-303 MCA; Eff. 12/31/72; AMD, 6/5/76; AMD, 1979 MAR p. 318, Eff. 3/30/79; AMD, 1986 MAR p. 952, Eff. 5/30/86; AMD, 1988 MAR p. 498, Eff. 3/11/88.)

\* 12.8.211 LIVESTOCK & COMMERCIAL USE (1) No person may use these lands for any commercial purpose without first securing written permission from the director or his agent.

(2) No commercial signs may be posted without prior approval of the director or his agent.

(3) The director with approval of the commission, may adopt a schedule of fees and/or security deposits including the option of fee and/or security deposit waiver, for commercial use of department lands for a period not exceeding seven (7) days. Commercial use of department lands longer than seven (7) days requires prior approval of the commission.

(4) The director or his agent may specify the conditions and stipulations under which commercial use will be permitted on department lands. (History: Secs. 23-1-106, 87-1-303 MCA; IMP, Sec. 23-1-102 MCA; Eff. 12/31/72; AMD, 1979 MAR p. 318, Eff. 3/30/79; AMD, 1983 MAR p. 655, Eff. 6/17/83; AMD, 1988 MAR p. 498, Eff. 3/11/88.)

12.8.212 BOATING AND SWIMMING (1) No boats may be launched from any boat trailer, car, truck, or other conveyance except at an established launching area, if such a facility is provided. Boats, boat trailers, trucks, or other conveyance may not be kept at a designated area unless the owner or possessor thereof is authorized to use the area under the provisions of these rules.

(2) Swimming areas when designated are limited by white and orange buoys. No person may swim beyond a designated swimming area where posted. No person may disturb, deface, remove, or relocate such buoys.

(3) No power boat may be operated or beached within a designated swimming area, nor shall it be operated with its motor in operation so that any portion of such boat approaches closer than 50 feet to any swimmer in the water. The term "swimmer" as used herein shall not mean any water skier, then engaged in waterskiing and using said boat as a use of towing power. This regulation is applicable only in water areas which are within 100 feet of the nearest shoreline and shall not apply to emergency or life-saving situations.

(4) No operator of a power boat may tow any water skier so that such water skier is caused to approach within 50 feet of any swimmer in the water. No water skier, while afloat on his water skis, may approach any swimmer in the water within 50 feet or water ski within the bounds of any designated swimming area.

(5) No person may leave a boat or other water craft unattended while moored or attached to a public boat dock nor shall public boat docks be used for any other purpose than loading and unloading of boats or other water craft unless otherwise posted. (History: Secs. 23-1-106, 87-1-303 MCA;

NOT FINAL

## **Issue Paper**

### **The Alberton Gorge - Commercial Fees and Registration**

ARM Rule 12.8.211 requires all commercial users to secure permission from the Director for the long-term use of Department owned or managed lands.

The commercial use of the Alberton Gorge has grown steadily over the 15 years. While a small portion of the commercial use is attributable to fishing outfitters, the majority of the commercial use involves whitewater rafting trips through the Gorge. Due to the unregulated growth in the commercial use of the Alberton Gorge, it seems reasonable to implement a commercial registration and fee process at this time.

The commercial users are a relatively small and "known" group of whitewater outfitters. There are a total of approximately (25) outfitters who have been historical commercial users of the Gorge. Of these, approximately a dozen individual outfitters account for the vast majority of the commercial whitewater use each season.

An ad-hoc committee was formed in November 1997 to discuss issues related to a proposed commercial registration and fee process. Members of the committee included owners of the larger/established whitewater rafting companies, smaller rafting companies, fishing outfitters, the University of Montana, and Malmstrom Air Force Base, - all historical commercial users of the Alberton Gorge. The committee has met three times in Missoula since late November.

The ad-hoc committee is very supportive of a registration process and fee structure for the commercial users of the Alberton Gorge. Collectively, the group has developed a very sound framework of how historical commercial use should be evaluated, recommendations for a Department issued use permit, and even what an acceptable fee structure should be (3% of gross revenues).

Attached is a memo detailing the agenda items that have been developed by the Alberton Gorge committee since November. Please note that there are (9) specific agenda items that the commercial users defined as critical to any proposed commercial registration and fee system for the Alberton Gorge. The commercial users are prepared to proceed with the registration and fee system for the upcoming 1998 season.



## ALBERTON GORGE COMMERCIAL USE

### 1) BOUNDARIES

- a) For the purpose of this rule the boundaries for commercial use activities, the Alberton Gorge shall be defined as the region between and including St. John's FAS to Forest Grove FAS along the Clark Fork River and shall be known as the GORGE.

### 2) DEFINITIONS

- a) COMMERCIAL USERS of the Gorge shall be defined as those businesses or groups who charge a fee of any type in the course of their activities on any FWP controlled property within the Gorge. The use of advertising and/or marketing is an additional means to further define commercial use.
- b) HISTORICAL COMMERCIAL USERS of the Alberton Gorge shall be defined as those legitimate businesses that conducted demonstrated commercial use of the Gorge prior to January 1, 1998.

March 15, 1999 shall be the end of the time period when past and current commercial users of the Gorge can register with the Department to document their historical use. Those who fail to show the Department proof of prior Commercial use by the date will not be considered historical commercial users.

### 3) COMMERCIAL USE LIMITATIONS

- a) Effective March 1, 1998 only demonstrated historical commercial users will be allowed to conduct commercial activity within the Gorge.

### 4) REGISTRATION OF COMMERCIAL USERS

- a) Effective March 1, 1998, a registration and permitting process for all commercial users of the Alberton Gorge will be implemented by the Department. The purpose of the registration process is to identify and document all historical commercial users of the Gorge.

### 5) PERMITS

- a) Each recognized commercial business using the Gorge will be issued a Commercial Use Permit by the Department. This Permit will be issued only to a commercial business and not to an individual.
- b) The Commercial Use Permits will be issued on a yearly basis by the Department.

### 6) FEES

- a) A fee of 3% of a commercial users unadjusted gross revenue proceeds for that portion of their commercial business conducted on the Gorge shall be the yearly commercial use fee for the Alberton Gorge.
- b) The 3% commercial use fee shall be paid to the Department in two installments. The first payment shall be 50% of the commercial users anticipated yearly revenue and shall be due on March 15 of each year. The second installment shall be due on December 1 of each year and shall be based upon the actual commercial use proceeds generated during the past commercial use season. The second payment shall "balance the books" for an individual commercial user for that year.





# **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

## **MEMO**

**To:** Alberton Gorge Commercial Users

**From:** Lee Bastian and Tom Reilly

**Re:** Alberton Gorge Commercial Meeting  
Held January 5, 1998 (*Third Meeting*)

**Date:** January 6, 1998

A third meeting of the commercial users was held on January 5. The purpose of the meeting was to further refine the agenda issues that were developed at the December 15 and November 21 meetings. Some items were expanded, others deleted, and several items defined or clarified further. This listing of issues is a refinement of the original topic issues and is intended to replace the working drafts sent out following the previous two meetings.

*The additions and changes from the January 5 meeting are shown in italics.*

### **AGENDA ISSUES**

1. Define Commercial Use On The Alberton Gorge FAS's
2. Define Pre-Existing Commercial Whitewater Use Of These FAS's
3. Where Commercial Fees Should Be Used
4. Certification and Safety Standards
5. Fees - Registration Fee/Use Fee
6. Registration Permit - Documentation
7. Boundaries
8. *Commercial Review Board*
9. *Transferring of Permits, Business Issues, Etc.*

## 1. DEFINE COMMERCIAL USE ON THE ALBERTON GORGE FAS'S:

- charges fees for floating (may include Air Force Bases(s), Church Groups, Universities, etc.)
- charges fees in contrast to "shared costs".
  - shared costs were defined further:
    - no paid hired guide for the group.
    - must be a bona-fide group.
    - any money paid by the group members are simply to pay for the trip; no profit is to be made.
    - no equipment "acquired" through the fees paid by the group members for the trip.
    - no marketing/advertising involved.
    - Boy Scouts and the incidental church group types;
      - these types of groups won't be restricted under this system.
      - fees for these types of incidental groups will be handled under the existing FWP group use permit system. A permit will be issued but a fee will not be charged until the group size reaches 15 people.
- the use of marketing/advertising could be used to define commercial use.

## 2. PRE-EXISTING COMMERCIAL WHITEWATER USE OF THESE FAS'S:

1. Documented use through 1997;
  - **Tax I.D. #**
  - Schedule 'C' Tax Documents
  - **Narrative (brochures/training/safety/CPR/list equipment)**
  - **Sample Trip Logs (how far back?)**
  - **Sample Release Forms (past years)**
  - **Proof of insurance (past years)**
  - **Workers Comp. Insurance**

Note: The (6) items shown in **bold** were deemed to be the most important in defining pre-existing commercial use.

*2. The cut-off for consideration of past or historical commercial use on the Alberton Gorge will be March 15, 1999. That is, if a commercial user claiming historical use has not come forward and registered by that date, no consideration would be given. Essentially, if a commercial user did not use the Gorge during the 1998 season or register their historical use in past seasons by March 15, 1999, their historical commercial use would be given no consideration from that point on.*

### **3. WHERE COMMERCIAL FEES SHOULD BE USED:**

- Put-ins/take-outs congested:
  - Raft slides/ramps
  - Widen Tarkio ramp
  - Widen/expand cul-de-sacs
  - Added signage
- River rangers/interns
  - 1998 season - interns for all week coverage of the site(s). Work tasks will include:
    - data gathering
    - education of users
    - FWP presence at the sites
- O&M Efforts
- Corridor Enhancement Account
  - Conservation Easements
  - Purchase Lands in the Corridor
  - Preserve the “gorge experience”

### **4. CERTIFICATION AND SAFETY STANDARDS**

- First Aid Kits
- CPR Training
- Equipment - pump/patch kit/etc.
- Compliance Inspections
- Guides' Training Standards (req'd by other states?)

Note: the general consensus of the group is that all of the above issues would be better handled beforehand in the narrative section of Item 2, with the other forms and paperwork. Tying up the FWP interns and the outfitters with this type of exercise at the sites would be a poor use of everyone's time and efforts.

## 5. FEES

### a. Per Head (\$/Person):

Disadvantage = difficult to give group discounts.

Disadvantage = ½ day vs. full day trips; disparity in length; bookkeeping nightmare.

### b. % of Gross - The group favored this type of a fee structure more than the per head approach;

$$3\%(\$750,000) = \$22,000$$

- The 3% of gross was discussed and generally agreed upon. This would be based upon an end of season recap from each commercial user.

- Each recognized commercial user will be required to submit an "up-front" fee based upon a predicted use level for that season. It will be necessary to reconcile the actual numbers and fee amount at the end of the season. *To reconcile the fees due, "close the books" on December 1 of each year.*

- *Each commercial user will pay 50% of their estimated 3% gross up-front. This would be due March 15 with the Permit Application. A portion of this money will be used to fund the (2) interns for the 1998 season.*

- As commercial users come forward or are discovered during the season they will be required to provide their individual estimated use numbers and pay the same 1998 percentage as those commercial users did at the start of the season. These commercial users would be given a one-launch grace period and/or allowed 5 working days to contact the Missoula FWP Office and pay the required commercial use fee.

### - Permit period;

- should the permits be issued one-year at a time?
- would 5-year permits be more efficient?

## 6. REGISTRATION PERMIT - DOCUMENTATION

- Proof of Insurance
- Proof of Workman's Comp. or "1099" Forms
- First Aid/CPR Training
- Name of Owner/Address/Phone #'s
- Pre-existing Commercial Use Check-Off Box
- Permit # on Form



*-FWP to send out the Permit Applications in February. Applications would be due by March 15, along with 50% of the estimated 3% of gross payment.*

*-Amount of Insurance - actual amount of coverage required is to be answered by FWP.*

*-A commercial use permit will be issued to a business, not to an individual.*

## **7. BOUNDARIES**

Petty Creek to St. John to Cyr to Tarkio to Forest Grove

- The FAS's that receive the most commercial use are Cyr and Tarkio.
- St. John and Cyr are the significant **put-in** locations.
- Tarkio is the most common and used **take-out** location.

## **8. COMMERCIAL REVIEW BOARD**

*At the January 5 meeting the idea of a Commercial Review Board (CRB) was discussed among the outfitters and commercial users in attendance. The primary purpose of the CRB will be to hear and review issues brought up by commercial outfitters concerning pre-existing use and associated types of conflicts related to the Alberton Gorge.*

*The CRB will be composed of (5) members. In addition to Lee Bastian, the Regional Park Manager, the other (4) members will be made up of commercial users of the Gorge. Upon hearing a complaint or argument, the CRB will then provide a recommendation to the Department concerning how to address a particular issue. All recommendations from the CRB regarding issue resolution will be formally released through the FWP Regional Supervisor, Rich Clough.*

*The meeting attendees supported the concept of establishing a CRB to resolve commercial user complaints and issues on a case-by-case basis. In fact, several of the attendees volunteered to be the initial members of the CRB.*

## 9. TRANSFERRING OF PERMITS, BUSINESS ISSUES, ETC.

*Numerous issues were discussed concerning the transfer of the commercial use permits between outfitters, selling of the permits to outfitters that currently do not operate on the Gorge, and the like. The following are some specific points:*

- The permits (or the Gorge permit portion of a business), should be transferable if an outfitter should decide to sell his/her business at some point in the future. The new owner of the Gorge portion of the business can change the business name.*
- It should be acceptable to buy-out an existing business or permittee on the Gorge, but the permit must be maintained as a separate business enterprise. If not maintained as a separate business, the permit cannot be sold again. That permit, in a sense, "goes away" and the number of permitted outfitters operating on the Gorge is reduced by one.*
- If an individual commercial use permit is not used for a season due to a death, illness, or other extreme situation, the permittee would have a one-year grace period to reorganize, sell the business, etc. without risk of losing their commercial use status on the Gorge.*
- Institutional commercial use permits issued to organizations/groups such as the Air Force, University of Montana, etc. are to have no value and cannot be sold or transferred to another entity.*

The above notes represent the ideas that have been discussed among the group at the three meetings that have been held in Missoula. The notes/ topics from the (9) agenda items are not intended to be final or conclusive, but are open to further refinement in the future.

Included in this packet of information is the "Draft Tentative Fee Rule" that will be presented to the FWP Commissioners at 1:00pm on Friday, January 16, 1998. The commission meeting will be at FWP Headquarters in Helena, 1420 East 6th Avenue. Thanks again for everyone's time and input. Hope to see you in Helena.



